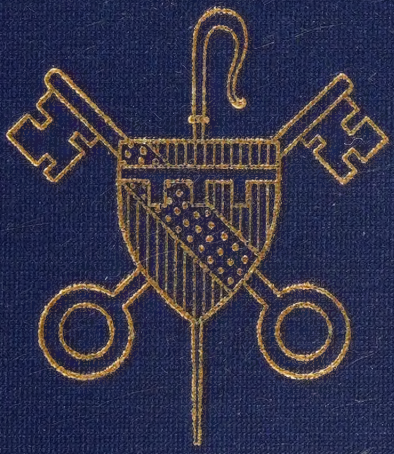
A History of The Parish and Church



# of St Mary Magdalene, Barnstaple.

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A History

of

The Parish and Church

of

St Mary Magdalene, Barnstaple,

BY

THE REVEREND

R. J. EDMUND BOGGIS, M.A., B.D.,

VICAR.

CROSS AND JACKMAN,

6 HIGH STREET, CANTERBURY.

1915.

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SIXTY-FOURTH OF THE LONG LINE OF DIOCESANS

UNDER WHOSE FOSTERING CARE

THE PRIORY AND AFTERWARDS THE CHURCH

OF

ST MARY MAGDALENE

HAVE BEEN ENABLED TO DO THEIR WORK FOR GOD

IN

BARNSTAPLE.

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PREFACE.

I desire to record my indebtedness and to express my gratitude to many friends and correspondents, who have generously rendered me valuable help in making this book reliable and accurate. Especially I would mention our local historians, Mr Thomas Wainwright and Mr Sydney Harper, who have read the whole work in proof, and, besides providing me with information, have suggested various corrections. For the guidance which has enabled me for the first time to publish the origin and meaning of the name " Barnstaple," I am beholden to the learning of such eminent Anglo-Saxon scholars as Dr Henry Bradley (Joint Editor of *The Oxford English Dictionary*), the Reverend James B. Johnston (Author of *The Place-Names of England and Wales*), Mr Allen Mawer (Professor of English Language and Literature in the Armstrong College at Newcastle-on-Tyne), and Mr W. H. Stevenson (of St John's College, Oxford).

No History of St Mary Magdalene's Priory has ever been attempted before (beyond Dr George Oliver's account in the *Monasticon Diœcesis Exoniensis*), and even now, though I have fairly well exhausted all available material, the chronicle is but fragmentary.

The form "Barum," which appears as an alternative for "Barnstaple" as early as the fourteenth century (see the *Reprint of the Barnstaple Records*, vol. 1, pp. 126, 128), seems to be only to some extent a contraction for the fuller name, being partly due to a mistake. Old writers presumably shortened "Barnstaple" to "Barn̄;" and inasmuch as the letters n and u were exactly alike in mediæval manuscripts, and Latin words ending in ū were much more common than those ending in n̄, it would be but reasonable that "Barn̄" should be read as "Barū." But terminal -ū was a very usual contraction for -um; and so "Barn̄," having become "Barū," would naturally be read—and written—as "Barum," which form is often used at the present time.

R. J. E. Boggis.

St Mary Magdalene's Vicarage,
Barnstaple.
November 10th, 1915.

CHAPTER I.

Early History of Barnstaple.

We have to allow that we do not know for a certainty when Barnstaple first came into being; for although modern maps of ancient geography show a Roman town named Artavia and a British Abertaw as occupying this site, it is certain that both of these are purely imaginary and devoid of all historical evidence. The former was an eighteenth century forgery by the notorious C. J. Bertram, who foisted on the public a map invented by himself as the genuine work of Richard of Cirencester; and the latter was a creation of the fancy of Leland, who betrayed alike his fallacy and his ignorance of Celtic etymology by coining a name in modern Welsh form instead of ancient British.

It seems probable that in Barnstaple's great castle-mound we may recognise one of those earthwork fortresses, of which so many still remain in North Devon, and which are believed—at least most of them—to have belonged to the British period. The plot of ground contained in the angle formed by the River Taw and its tributary the Yeo

would offer a suitable site for the erection of a strong-hold; and though the others all stand on higher levels, this might well form a link in the big chain of entrenchments, that reaches from Countesbury and Brendon to Hartland and Welcombe, other examples being found at Parracombe, Martinhoe, Trentishoe, Berrynarbor, Ilfracombe, and Shirwell, on one side, and at Huntshaw, Bideford, Buckland Brewer, Parkham, and Clovelly, on the other.*

We are on surer ground when we come to the Anglo-Saxon period, for the name Barnstaple makes its appearance about the end of the tenth century, and the word has much to reveal about the history of the place. The earliest known occurrence is on coins of Ethelred II (979-1016), minted at Barnstaple, of which very many have been found, especially in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, whither they had been taken as dane-geld. On these the name figures in its contracted form as Bearda, or some variant of the same, *e.g.*, Bardan, Bard, Bear, Beardas; and the same were stamped on the coins of the succeeding kings, the fuller form Berdest being found first in the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066).†

During the same period the full name—under the form Beardastapol— first appears in literature. In the Bodleian Library at Oxford is a charter of

**The Victoria History of Devon*, vol. I.

†*The coins and tokens of Devon*, A. J. V. Radford, Devon. Assoc. Trans., vol. 39, p. 349.

A.D. 930, recording the grant by King Athelstan of three hides of land at Sandford near Crediton to Eadulf, Bishop of Crediton, and the monastery at that place. To this charter there was added in 1018 an endorsement, which sets forth that Bishop Eadnoth of Crediton puts one Beorhtnoth in possession of some land to hold as security for a sum of thirty mancuses of gold that he had lent to the Bishop, "and", it adds, "the Bishop made this known to the councils of the boroughs of Exeter, Totnes, Lydford, and Barnstaple". The form used here is Beardastapol, which half a century later in *Domesday Book* had already been modernized as Barnestaple.*

The word Barnstaple or Beardastapol is Anglo-Saxon, being compounded of Beardan, the genitive case of Bearda, which is a personal name, and stapol, a pillar, post, or column. Beard is apparently a short form of a longer name (such as Beard-wulf), Bearda being a familiar or pet form, just as Frederick becomes Fred and then Freddy, and Edmund or Edward becomes Ed and then Eddy. Barnstaple then means "Bearda's pillar", that is "the pillar erected by Bearda," or possibly "the pillar erected in memory of Bearda."

Who this Bearda was, we do not know; but we may form some conjecture as to his date, and even some guess about himself.

* *The Crawford Collection of early Charters*, edited by A. S. Napier and W. H. Stevenson, pp. 9, 77, 79.

The fact that the word Barnstaple is Anglo-Saxon shows us that the name must have had its origin—and therefore that Bearda's pillar must have been erected—sometime after the Anglo-Saxon conquest of North Devon ; while the testimony of the coins gives as a limit the end of the tenth century.

Now the course of the Anglo-Saxon conquest in the west may be traced step by step in the pages of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the kings of Wessex gradually extending their sway through Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall. Thus in 682 Centwine is said to have driven the Britons to the sea, which doubtless means the Bristol Channel. In 710 Ina "fought against Gerent, King of the Welsh" (*i.e.*, British) ; and so firm a hold had he obtained over Somerset, that he built the minster at Glastonbury and the town of Taunton. Cuthred (741-755) too and Cynewulf (755-786) waged prolonged warfare against the Welsh, and the final conquest was wrought by the arms of Egbert (802-839), who is declared to have laid waste West Wales from east to west in 815. This campaign must have included North Devon, and though there was further serious fighting in Cornwall (with battles at Camelford in 825 and at Hengeston in 835), North Devon seems to have given no further trouble. Therefore we may with confidence infer that Bearda's pillar was set up, or, in other words, that Barnstaple was founded, subsequent to 815 ; and it may be that

Bearda was one of Egbert's chief captains, who was rewarded for successful service in the work of conquest by a grant of land, on which he set up his pillar as token of possession and as a nucleus of a settlement or town, his choice of a site being perhaps decided by the existence there of the old British castle-mound. Anyhow we must believe that Barnstaple was founded long before the time of Ethelred II, for he would select as a minting-town only a place that had already attained to some considerable importance. Thus our investigation leads us to place in the ninth century the origin of Barnstaple as an English town, with the possibility that it may have had its origin several centuries earlier as a British strong-hold.

It ought to be added that in an "Anglo-Saxon List of early Territorial Names," which is considered to belong to the latter part of the eighth century, occurs the mention of "Bearstaple." But the form of the word makes it difficult to identify it with our Barnstaple, nor can we harmonize with the history of the Anglo-Saxon conquest the appearance of such a name in North Devon at so early a date. Furthermore the context does not suggest any connection with the south-west of England. We therefore conclude that our Barnstaple does not appear in that "List."*

It may be that the unnamed place, that figures in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* under the date 894,

* *Cartularium Saxonicum*, ed. by W. de Grey Birch, vol. 1, p. 415; vol. 3, p. 671-2.

was our Barnstaple. The record is merely this :— "Some forty ships went about to the north, and besieged a fortress in Devonshire by the north sea." True, our town is not actually by the sea ; but its river is tidal, and the estuary may well have been wider a thousand years ago, and would certainly enable the warships of the period to attack it. We cannot press the identification, but it is not easy to say what other place would suit the description, and it seems probable that Barnstaple was then the chief settlement in these parts.

The selection of Pilton by King Athelstan as a site for his Benedictine priory may be taken as an indication of the growing importance of Barnstaple ; for in choosing a place in so wild a country as North Devon he would naturally settle his small community of monks within easy distance of a town, where their wants could be supplied without difficulty. Athelstan, who is the reputed founder also of a prebendal church at Axminster, a priory at Bodmin, and a collegiate church at St Burian, is further by tradition accorded an important place in the early history of Barnstaple, some authorities regarding him as the actual founder of the town, others declaring that he appropriated the tithes of Barnstaple Church to Malmesbury Abbey, while others again assert that the first royal charter of the borough was granted by him. Indeed this last claim is of such long standing that even as far back as the time of Edward III the inhabitants of Barnstaple petitioned

the King to renew Athelstan's charter, which—so they maintained—they had lost. His Majesty however required evidence in support of their contention; and as none of a convincing nature could be produced, he refused to do as they asked.* It may be that he acted rightly, there being no proof that Athelstan had ever granted them a charter; but this ancient and insistent claim was probably not altogether devoid of foundation, and though documentary support is lacking, we are inclined to believe that Barnstaple Castle and the fortifications of the town were his work. It would moreover be only reasonable that he should grant privileges to the borough near which he had founded his priory.

Information is not forthcoming as to the religious condition of North Devon previous to the introduction of Christianity, and we are left to infer that Druidism held possession of the people of Damnonia; and probably it continued in parts for some centuries afterwards, with its belief in polytheism and the transmigration of souls, its mystic rites in sacred groves and its human sacrifices, its veneration for the oak and the mistletoe, and its long white priestly robes and its golden sickles.

The earliest known Christian missionaries were of Goidel race, coming from Wales, their ministries belonging to the middle of the sixth century or a little later, and of these there were

**Memorials of Barnstaple*, J. B. Gribble, pp. 213-9; *Barnstaple Records*, vol. I, pp. 137-149.

three.* The first was St Brannock (*i.e.*, Little Bran), who settled at Braunton—probably named after him, and doubtless evangelized the region of which Barnstaple is now the centre. Shortly afterwards St Nectan made Hartland his head-quarters; and a little later arrived the greatest of the trio, St Petrock (*i.e.*, Little Peter), the apostle of Devon and eastern Cornwall, whose wide-spread influence is attested by many a church dedication in either county. Thus we may well believe that Egbert's conquest of North Devon was not marked by the terrible characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon wars of early times, for here it was a case of Christians fighting against those who were—at least to some extent—also Christians. Whether these early Christians were ruled by bishops of their own, or whether they bore allegiance to the Church in Cornwall, we cannot tell. We can only infer that, from the time when a see was established at Crediton in 909, they were subject to the bishops of that place, and to the bishops of Exeter when the see was transferred to that city a century and a half later. The church at Barnstaple, we may observe, whose present dedication is "St Peter," as it has been for many centuries, may very possibly have originally been "St Petrock's"—a dedication that is still fairly common, though there is reason to believe that the better known "St Peter" was in some cases substituted in later times.

**Christianity in Devon before A.D. 909*, J. F. Chanter, p. 21.

The importance of Barnstaple is attested by the above-mentioned charter of 1018, which ranks the borough with Exeter, Totnes, and Lydford, as one of the chief towns of Devon; and we learn further from a study of coins that those four were the four minting-places of the Anglo-Saxon kings in this county, coining being done at Barnstaple not only under Ethelred II, but also under Cnut, Harold I, Edward the Confessor, William I, William II, and Henry I.

The early history of Barnstaple closes with the Norman Conquest, concerning which event the *Domesday Book* incidentally shows that the people of Barnstaple made a stout resistance against the invaders in 1068. They had to submit; but the record, that eighteen years later there were still in the town twenty-three houses that had been in ruins since the Conquest, is proof of the exceptional bravery or stubbornness of their defence, the only other similar instance west of Exeter being Lydford, where still heavier destruction is chronicled.*

We may note that of the four Devonshire boroughs Exeter was by far the largest, the other three being nearly equal, though Barnstaple would seem to have occupied the last place in the list. Furthermore at and before the period of the Conquest those four boroughs were bound to provide their quota of men or money in time of any national war by land or sea, the three smaller

* *The Norman Conquest*, E. A. Freeman, vol. 4, pp. 162-3.

towns contributing equally, and their joint effort being equal to that of Exeter. The actual population of Barnstaple is not stated, but we know that in 1086 there were 58 burgesses within the walls and 9 without, and that the borough was held by the King, though the Bishop of Coutances, Baldwin the Sheriff of Devon, Robert of Albemarle, Robert of Belmont, and Drogo, all owned property in the town.

CHAPTER II.

The founding of St Mary Magdalene's Priory.

Undoubtedly the most important ecclesiastical establishment that Barnstaple has known was St Mary Magdalene's Priory, which for more than four centuries and a quarter—from its foundation in 1107 down to its suppression in 1536—occupied a prominent place in the history of the town, and exercised considerable influence over its fortunes.

The founder of the Priory was a remarkable man—one who was to be numbered among the great of his own generation, and he deserves more than a passing notice in this book.

Joel, commonly known as Joel of Totnes, whose name usually appears in contemporary documents as Iuhel or Iudhel, appears to have been a Breton, and was a son of one Alured (or Alfred). Standing high in the favour of William the Conqueror, he became one of the principal landowners of Devon, holding during the reign of that monarch the borough of Totnes and as many as 110 manors in the county and one in Cornwall, as well as a house in Exeter. These

he had possession of for twenty years, and near the end of his tenure (in 1088) he showed his generosity to the Church by founding at Totnes the Benedictine Priory of St Mary, to which he appropriated the Parish Church of Totnes. But soon after the accession of William II some of the leading English nobles conspired together to set his elder brother Robert, Duke of Normandy, on the throne of England, and Joel of Totnes seems to have joined the confederacy. It was natural therefore that the triumphant sovereign should revenge himself by stripping Joel of his domains, which were bestowed on Roger of Nonant (1089), the former owner consequently disappearing from the scene, and probably seeking safety by remaining beyond the sea.

The death of Rufus brought a change in 1100, for Henry I revived his father's policy of honouring Joel, and restored him to a leading position among the great men of Devon. Roger of Nonant indeed was not ousted from his possessions in the south of the county, but Joel was made the chief landowner in the north by receiving from the King the borough of Barnstaple and 93 manors; and here he settled, apparently for the rest of his life, continuing as Lord of Barnstaple for thirty years till his death in 1130, when he was succeeded by his son Alured (or Alfred).

Joel must have been an old man when he died, and he had long before conceived a desire to withdraw from the world's struggles and activities, and

seek rest and peace within monastic walls. The oldest religious house in Devon had been founded by him, but Totnes was no longer his; so at Barnstaple he built another, which ranks second in age among such institutions in the county; and in his foundation charter (to be dated about 1107) he states definitely that he intends to become a monk in his new priory, "and there may I quickly pass to the glory of my Maker." It appears indeed that he did not fulfil his intention at that time, for some Cluniac monks from Dinan in Brittany, who visited "Bannistaple" in 1113, found our Joel in residence at his castle; and again ten years later he was at Winchester with the King, his name appearing as a witness on a charter granted by Henry I to the Church in Exeter. After that, however, he probably took the vows, and spent his last years in his priory at Barnstaple, and was buried—as was usual with founders—in the place of honour on the north side of the altar in the church of his foundation.*

Joel's new priory belonged to the Cluniac Order, which was the first reformation of the old Benedictine Rule, and an attempt to revive the simple severity of life, that had been the aim of the original movement, but had been so widely neglected. This was by origin a French Order, taking its rise in Burgundy about a century before, and now becoming exceedingly popular, the Abbot

**Totnes Priory and Medieval Town*, H. R. Watkin, vol. 2, pp. 665-680.

of Cluny being the recognised head of all the daughter-houses, numbering some hundreds throughout Europe. The introduction of the Order into England was a consequence of the Norman Conquest, but the system was never much in favour in this insular and independent country, so that the Cluniac houses of England and Scotland at no time exceeded thirty-eight. The Barnstaple Priory, which was senior to all others of the Order in this land, was by its founder made immediately subject to the Priory of St Martin's-in-the-Fields at Paris, and ultimately to the mother-house at Cluny; and thus it was one of the hundred "Alien Houses" in England—a troublesome class, because the bishop had but little control over them, as their allegiance was rendered principally to their ecclesiastical superiors in France.

As the site of his priory Joel chose a plot of ground outside Barnstaple, stretching from the North Gate to the East Gate, and bounded by the town-wall, the river Yeo, and the road that is now known as Vicarage Street. Here would be erected the usual monastic buildings—a church, a refectory, a dormitory, a chapter-house, cloisters, a kitchen, a residence for the prior, and a gateway, known as the Prior's Gateway, facing the town, besides various subsidiary edifices, such as a granary, a brewery, and a bake-house; the whole being surrounded by a strong wall to protect it from assault or robbery.

For its support Joel endowed his priory with the manors of Pilton and Pilland, with the Barnstaple mill (now the Town Mill)—the inhabitants of the town and castle being bound to have their corn ground there, and with fishing rights in the adjoining waters. Furthermore he appropriated to the monks the Parish Church (St Peter's) of Barnstaple with its tithes and the Chapel of St Sabinus, a portion of the tithes of Fremington, and the tithe of the fisheries; and he also ordained that their property was to be exempt from all claims for public service. And, in order that this grant might be made doubly secure, Joel obtained from Henry I a confirmatory charter, in which he added the proviso that the Barnstaple Priory is to pay annually to St Martin's-in-the-Fields at Paris the sum of forty solidi; and another confirmatory charter at the same time (about 1107) from William Warelwast, Bishop of Exeter. The same monarch continued to show his favour to Joel's foundation by issuing a further declaration of exemption—apparently when, after the death of the founder, the claim to such exemption was questioned. The possessions and privileges of the priory were endorsed and confirmed by charters granted by Henry de Tracy, by William de Braose (whose mother was a daughter of Joel of Totnes), by William de Braose, junior, (son of the aforesaid William,) and by William Brewer, Bishop of Exeter, who ordained (in 1233) that the priory was to have a permanent

chaplain, the prior providing him with food and a house close to the gateway, and admitting him to the privileges enjoyed by the monks. And further King Henry IV in an *inspeximus* of 1408 declares that he has examined the principal charters mentioned above, and that he ratifies them.*

The normal daily life of the inmates—a prior and probably some fifteen monks or more, when the house was full—would be chiefly given up to devotions in their church, to study in the cloister, and to manual work in their own grounds; for life in a monastery was based on five essential principles—it was to be a religious life, a community life, a life of self-dedication, a life of obedience, and a life of work.

It was to be a religious life, for to the monk the worship of God was of paramount importance, and to it he was to subordinate every thought and action, and to consecrate every hour of the day. He would abandon the world with all its affections and occupations and ambitions—as far as was possible—in order to give himself up wholly to the main business of his life, *viz.*, the salvation of his soul, and the fitting of himself for a better world. For this end the twenty-four hours were portioned out into an almost unceasing round of prayer and praise. The offices of mattins and lauds were recited some time between mid-night and sun-rise,

*Oliver's *Monasticon*, p. 198; Dugdale's *Monasticon*, vol. 5, p. 197; H. R. Watkin's *Totnes*, vol. 2, p. 669; British Museum MSS., Lansd. 447, ff. 56, 57.

and the other canonical hours—prime, terce, sext, nones, vespers, and compline—were arranged at intervals during the day, and all would have attended mass in the early morning.

The community life consisted in this—that there was no privacy and no personal rights in a Cluniac house. The monks were to possess no property of their own, for they had all things common. They fed side by side in one common refectory, they held their business meetings in one common chapter-house, they worshipped together in the same choir, they slept in one common dormitory, they studied together in the cloisters, which were frequented by all alike—for there were no private cells; in short, it was from beginning to end a common life.

A third principle was that the monastic life was a life of self-surrender. The black habit, the tonsured head, the shaven face, were outward reminders that the brother had severed himself from the world. Marriage, family ties, property—all were abjured; and when once he had finally put his hand to the plough, there was to be no looking back. His vow of self-dedication was irrevocable, for retrogression would be equal to apostacy.

A further essential principle was obedience—obedience to Holy Church, obedience to the Rule of the Order, and obedience to the Prior. So exacting were the laws and regulations that had to be obeyed, that it almost seems to us as though

the monks were treated like children. Not only were the dietary laws very severe—the meals were few, and the food of the plainest—but without the prior's permission the monks were not to venture outside the precinct-wall; when sent out on business, they were not without leave to accept an invitation to a meal; they might not receive letters from relations or friends, or write to them, except by special grace; and there was an exact definition of the degrees of correction to be meted out to the lazy or careless monk who might commit such an offence as coming late into church or refectory.

Once more, the monastic life was a life of work, not merely mental and intellectual work, but manual labour also; and before the age of shops such an institution would have to provide itself with everything that would be necessary for the every-day life of its inmates. They would grow their own corn, and grind it at their own mill by the river Yeo; they had their own gardens, and their own river or fish-ponds; they would doubtless do all their brewing and baking and cooking on the premises, and perhaps also the building of any new structures, and the repairing of the old; and there was the writing of service-books and business documents, and the distribution of the daily charity at the gate, and the entertainment of visitors or way-farers. A busy life it doubtless was, but it ought to have been found to be a happy and also a holy one—if all was in good order.

The old records of the priory throw some light upon its constitution and its method of government. Its prior—who at least in later times was nominated by the Lord of Barnstaple Castle—was appointed by the prior and monks of St Martin's-in-the-Fields at Paris, and was not uncommonly (at any rate in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) a Frenchman; but he had to submit himself to the Bishop of Exeter for institution and take an oath of canonical obedience to him, and then on his mandate be inducted into his office by the Archdeacon of Barnstaple.* In troublous times however, such as a war, the King would take into his own hands the temporalities of the priory, and exercise the patronage instead of St Martin's, the rights and privileges being formally restored at the conclusion of the trouble.

The prior had thus to be subject to two ecclesiastical superiors, one in England and one in France, each of whom would from time to time hold his Visitation of the priory†; and although St Mary Magdalene's was an alien house, its head could not go to report himself to the prior of the mother-house at Paris until he had obtained a permit from his diocesan at Exeter—who would take the precaution of requiring his return by a certain date under pain of the greater excommunication.‡ No doubt the respective powers of the

**Bishop Grandisson's Register*, p. 305; *Barnstaple Records*, vol. I, p. 124.

†*Bishop Grandisson's Register*, p. 539. ‡Do., pp. 289, 787.

two authorities would vary from time to time according to their relative personal influence or the current political circumstances; and certainly St Martin's did not always have its own way, for we find that on the death of Prior Hayn in 1376 Nicholas Ilkeston, the Paris nominee, was set aside, and Chelfham was instituted, the King explaining to Sir James Audley, the patron, that as he was at war with France, the nomination was reserved to himself.* Indeed there is extant a resolution passed by the Chapter-General of the Cluniac Order in 1291, complaining that our priory and also that of St James's, Exeter, were withdrawing themselves as far as they could from their allegiance, and were submitting themselves too much to the authority of the Bishop; and therefore the Prior of St Martin's-in-the-Fields is instructed to exercise his disciplinary powers, and to do his utmost to recall the recalcitrants to their former obedience.†

The account of one Visitation, which has been preserved, gives an interesting insight into the condition of our priory. It was held by the Cluniac authorities, the Priors of Mont Didier in France, Lenton in Nottinghamshire, and Montacute in Somerset acting as Visitors, and investigating eighteen houses in England, Barnstaple being taken in August 1279. Their report is as follows:—

**Bishop Brantyngham's Register*, p. 48; British Museum Add. Ch. 56428.

†*Visitations and Chapters-General of the Order of Cluni*, Sir G. F. Duckett, pp. 208, 243.

"On the Thursday preceding St Lawrence's Day we were at Barnstaple, which is dependent on St Martin's. Here there are five monks besides the prior; and they live good lives, and keep the Rule, and the services are duly performed. There used to be fewer monks, but the Ordinary, to whom the prior professes obedience, as he always has done, made the prior raise the number to five, and is pressing for even more. The stores in the priory were scanty, but harvest was coming on. The prior was engaged in a law-suit with a neighbouring abbot concerning some tithe of the value of £10 (15 marks), of which the abbot had defrauded him. The abbot, however, was offering him a lump sum of £100, or rather less; and after I left I heard that the prior had taken the money, so that the abbot now holds the tithe, and will always hold it. We find the prior remiss in asserting his rights. When he became prior he found his priory saddled by a debt of £35 6s. 8d. (53 marks), and there was a further sum of £20 (30 marks) owing to a Parisian, which he has not paid; and moreover he owes £4 (6 marks) to the Prior of St Martin's. Of the debt of £35 6s. 8d. that he owed, he has paid only £20. He has enclosed his priory with fairly good cob-walls, and he has built a small grange. The other buildings are satisfactory, and kept in order. The church is a good one, strongly built, and pleasing in appearance. Of the monks, one he has himself invested with the habit, and another

he has borrowed from the Prior of Montacute. He was admitted prior four years ago, and has been in residence for four years."*

From this report we infer that our priory was in a fairly satisfactory state under the rule of Theobald de Curtipalacio, except for the fewness of its inmates; and though its condition was not free from reproach, as was Carswell, another house of this Order in the county of Devon, it was yet greatly superior to the other Devonshire Cluniac priory, St James's, Exeter, which had been altogether impoverished by our Theobald before he had been promoted from there to Barnstaple.† The abbot referred to in the Visitors' report was doubtless the head of Cleeve Abbey in Somerset, for while the land on one side of Pilton Street belonged to our priory, that on the other was held by that abbot.

The order of the proceedings adopted for the filling of a vacancy in the headship of the priory may be illustrated from the records in the Episcopal Registers at Exeter. We read there how on the vacancy of the office through the death of Prior John Soyer the Bishop appointed as sequestrators the Prior of Pilton, the Rector of Tawstock, and the Vicar of Bishops Tawton, and directed them to gather in the fruits and the crops, and to make allowance for the support of the monks and the conduct of the services, sending in to his lordship

* *Charters and Records of Cluni*, Sir G. F. Duckett, vol. 2, p. 130.
†Duckett, vol. 2, pp. 135, 136.

an account of their management.* Further details are supplied by another case at a later date (1428), when the Bishop commissioned John Waryne, Canon of Exeter, to make inquisition into the circumstances and to take action. He reports that in the priory church he has examined many witnesses—local clergy, the mayor, and others—and that he finds the post is vacant through the death of Simon Oclee; that John, Earl of Huntingdon, is the true patron on the nomination of the Prior of St Martin's; that Thomas Dene, Prior of St James's, Exeter, is Vicar General of the Prior of St Martin's, and has the right to nominate a fit person for the priory to the said nobleman, or to the lords of the castle and town of Barnstaple, who are the true patrons; and that Hugh Lytone, Cluniac monk, who has been nominated by the Earl, is in every way a fitting candidate. Therefore, acting on the authority of the Bishop's commission, he has in Barnstaple parish church admitted Hugh Lytone as prior, and has inducted him into the possession of his office, assigning him a stall in the choir of his church and a seat in the chapter-house, and receiving from him his oath of canonical obedience to the Bishop.†

Bishop Grandisson's Register, p. 760.

†*Bishop Lacy's Register*, p. 112.

CHAPTER III.

History of St Mary Magdalene's Priory.

The extant chronicles are not sufficient to enable the recorder to compile a consecutive history of the priory. Nor indeed should we be justified in expecting that a little provincial religious house would naturally provide enough material for the writing of such a history; for events would be few, its influence—except in its own immediate neighbourhood—would be small, and only seldom would it be brought into contact with the outside world. It must therefore be no matter for surprise, and an opinion unfavourable to the well-being and well-doing of the priory must not be formed, if it becomes apparent that our knowledge of its achievements and its fortunes is largely confined to the misdeeds and the correcting of the priors, and to disputes about rights and property with local magnates, secular and ecclesiastical. Such episodes, especially the latter, were usual in all monasteries; and if the normal work of such an institution as St Mary Magdalene's Priory, with its round of services and its daily routine, was being carried on

conscientiously and satisfactorily, there would be but little matter suitable for permanent record.

Two periods—late in the thirteenth century and early in the fourteenth—were marked by serious troubles, brought upon the priory by the neglect or the misdemeanours of its priors, so that the names of Simon de Gurney, John de Sancta Gemma, and John Soyer will ever bear the stigma of shame and disgrace.

The former trouble occurred during the episcopate of Walter Bronescombe, who in 1265 at Chudleigh admitted as a new prior Brother Simon de Gurney. By his promise as a priest, confirmed by an oath on the Holy Gospels, he solemnly pledged himself to act faithfully to his diocesan and to his convent of monks; but, alas! only seven years later we find that he had transgressed so heinously—though the crime is not specified—that the Bishop had to take the extreme measure of excommunicating him. An accomplice, Richard Kalynnal, sought out his lordship at Penryn and apologised, whereupon he was promptly forgiven and restored; but no word is said about any submission of Prior de Gurney, who, as far as we know, remained excommunicate to the day of his death. The office was therefore vacant, and as the authorities in Paris failed to make a presentation, and matters both spiritual and temporal in the priory were suffering sadly for want of a ruler, the Bishop after a lapse of two years and a half com-

missioned the Archdeacon of Exeter to represent to the prior and monks of St Martin's-in-the-Fields that if they did not make an appointment in two months' time, he would take action himself. This threat had effect, for the proper patrons presented for the vacant post Theobald de Curtipalacio, Prior of St James's, Exeter, who made his profession to the Bishop and was duly admitted by him at Clyst (*i.e.*, Sowton) in 1275.*

Half a century later further trouble occurred. Prior John de Sancta Gemma was reported to the Bishop for wastefulness and extravagance, and his lordship was assured that matters had reached so grave a condition that the prior ought to be suspended. A commission was therefore issued by Bishop Stapeldon in 1323 to Thomas de Stapeldon, Canon of Exeter, and Henry Bloyou, Rector of St Ruan Lanihorne, to examine into the case, and to suspend the accused, if the charges were proved to be well-founded. Apparently however the evidence was not sufficient to convict, or at least the suspension was only temporary.†

This warning, however, had little effect, for nine years later the state of the priory was worse than before. John de Sancta Gemma had caused grave scandal by the neglect of his duties through long absence, so that Bishop Grandisson found it necessary to take action by sequestrating the

* *Bishop Bronescombe's Register*, pp. 24, 25.
† *Bishop Stapeldon's Register*, p. 41.

income of the priory, leaving only sufficient for the support of the monks and the performance of the services. When, however, the sequestrators, the Vicars of Bishops Tawton and Barnstaple, attempted to execute their commission, they found the priory doors barred against them; and notwithstanding their urgent and repeated demands and their long waiting the monks refused to open to them. Furthermore certain unknown miscreants defended the house *vi et armis*, and prevented them from forcing an entry, thus bringing contempt upon the law and the Bishop, and incurring for themselves the sentence of the greater excommunication. For two months the Bishop waited, hoping that the evil-doers would relent, but all in vain; so he then charged the sequestrators to proceed again to the priory, and to repeat their attempt on three successive days, having first affixed a copy of the process on the priory door, so that the inmates should be unable to urge a plea of non-cognisance; and if they are still contumacious and so continue for three days longer, the priory is then to be laid under an interdict, which is to be published on Sundays and feast-days in every church in the archdeaconry and in Exeter Cathedral.*

Meanwhile one John Soyer (also called John de Parys) had intruded himself into the office of prior, and succeeded in occupying it for nearly two years; for although the Bishop commissioned the

* *Bishop Grandisson's Register*, pp. 659, 670.

Precentor and Canon Henry Bloyou to eject him, and informed the Prior of St Martin's-in-the-Fields that he was reported to be a man of evil life and morals, Soyer had somehow gained the favour of the mother-house. The Bishop was therefore induced to grant him institution in succession to Sancta Gemma (who was conveniently declared to have resigned his office*), and he ruled as prior until removed by death in 1334, having nearly ruined the fortunes of his priory.†

The next prior, Imbert de Gaumachiis (or Danmanchiis), seems to have been in every way exemplary; so much so that when the Prior of St Martin's contemplated re-calling him to Paris, after he had held office only six months, the Bishop remonstrated, pointing out that to remove him so soon, before he had had time to restore the shattered fortunes of the priory, would be likely to complete the threatened disaster, especially as the present and the prospective means of the house were scarcely sufficient to keep the inmates from starvation.‡ This appeal had happy effect, and Prior Imbert was allowed to remain, and ruled for fifteen years.

Throughout the whole of their existence as a corporate body the prior and monks were patrons of the vicarage of Barnstaple, save only when the King seized the temporalities (generally in time of

Bishop Grandisson's Register, p. 1292.
†*Bishop Grandisson's Register*, pp. 263, 289, 659, 760.
‡*Bishop Grandisson's Register*, pp. 289, 787, 1304.

war), and made the appointments; and their patronage was exercised very frequently, for the post seems to have been little desired, the vicars being ready to exchange with the incumbents of Marwood and Alwington and other benefices. Perhaps this was but reasonable, for the prior was the chief ecclesiastic in Barnstaple, the vicar being in a somewhat inferior position and having to pay to the priory the large sum of £5 per annum (equivalent to £120 in present value).* Disputes arose from time to time about that same £5, and more than once the vicar had to appear before the Bishop on the charge of neglect of payment of his dues to St Mary Magdalene's.† An agreement, entered into on one such occasion in 1352 (when the arrears had accumulated for three years), contained a clause to the effect that the priory was to have half the candles and wax offered in Barnstaple Church on every feast of the Purification.‡

As patrons of the living the prior and monks felt it incumbent on them to provide a suitable house of residence for the vicar. This was done in 1313, the building being erected on the site occupied by the present vicarage; and some years later they increased the glebe by handing over a garden fifty-six perches in extent—land, which belonged to them, though it was outside the walls of the priory. The form of compact in which they bound

Bishop Stapledon's Register, p. 41.
†*Bishop Grandisson's Register*, pp. 81, 1046.
‡*Bishop Grandisson's Register*, p. 1121.

themselves to build a house for the vicar, contained also specifications about liabilities and about tithes. The brethren were to see that all was in good order—the vicarage, the church windows, and the church's goods, such as books, vestments, and other ornaments; and afterwards the vicar for the time being was to keep them in proper repair, as well as to pay all ordinary ecclesiastical dues. As for tithes, while the greater tithes belonged to the priory, the vicar was to have the small tithes of the whole parish, but not of the monks' live-stock, or of their mills. A later agreement however reserved to them also the small as well as the great tithes of meadows and gardens in the parish, as having been of old time granted to the sacristy of the priory.*

Of law suits or disputes there were several worth recording. The first of which we have mention occurred late in the twelfth century, when Prior Simon and his monks had a difference with one Herbert de Halsway about a mill at Almsworthy (Olmedesworthie) in the parish of Exford, over which they claimed to have rights. They had been suing for five solidi for it, but now they make a compact with the said Herbert that they will take the mill into their own hands and pay four solidi a year for it; but that when they give it up, they shall receive their five solidi again.†

* *Bishop Stapleldon's Register*, p. 41; *Bishop Grandisson's do.*, pp. 1046, 1121.
† *British Museum Add. Ch.* 56426.

Next in 1216 Prior Richard found himself called upon to prosecute two delinquents, John de Justue and Richard Inge, because they had—so he averred—failed to pay their tithes and offerings and other church dues, a similar charge being brought against nine other persons about the same time.* These proceedings had a legal interest some centuries later, for the famous (or notorious) William Prynne cited this case as an instance of a suit prosecuted in Court Christian for chattels and debts, notwithstanding the King's prohibition that matters of that nature should not be brought into that Court.†

Another case came up for judgment before the King at Westminster in 1306. This was a dispute concerning some tithes at Croyde in the parish of Georgeham, which were claimed by the Prior of St Mary Magdalene's, Barnstaple, but which were declared by the Rector of Georgeham to have always belonged to him and his predecessors. The decision of the King's court is not recorded, but we infer that our prior failed to secure the money.‡

Then there was a contention with Sir William Martyn, knight, in 1311 for the patronage of the chantry chapel of St Thomas-à-Becket by Barnstaple Bridge. If we may judge by the shortness of tenure of the various chaplains, the right

* *Plac. de Term. Hillar.* An. II, Hen. III, rot. 9 intus, in Turre London.

† *Antiquæ Constitutiones Regni Angliæ*, W. Prynne, ed. 1672, p. 74.

‡ Oliver's *Monasticon of Devon*, p. 200.

of presentation was not a matter of much moment; but in any case the monks were the losers, for Sir William figures afterwards as patron.*

A difference of opinion between the priory and the town came up for settlement at Exeter in 1327, the matter in dispute being a claim by the monks for an annual payment in lieu of grinding service at their mills, which they had demanded from the mayor and burgesses of Barnstaple. This case too went against the priory, and the conventual seal had to be affixed to a formal release, wherein the prior and monks pledged themselves and their successors to prosecute no such claim in future.†

Another suit was decided by the Bishop (Edmund Lacy) in 1435, when he happened to be visiting Pilton, the disputants being the Priors of Pilton and Barnstaple. The trouble here was some uncertainty about the common boundary of the two parishes, in consequence of which each prior claimed the tithes of a piece of land called Petyngdon (now Pottington) and of a meadow on the east of Pilton foss, known as Hollyford. The Bishop summoned both parties to appear before him in Pilton Priory, and having examined fully into the matter, and taken the evidence of sixteen witnesses concerning the traditional parochial boundaries, he ruled that both plots of ground were included in the parish of Pilton, and that therefore the tithes of both rightly belong to the prior of that place.‡

* *Bishop Stapeldon's Register*, p. 188. † *Barnstaple Records*, vol. I, p. 129.
‡ *Bishop Lacy's Register*, A.D. 1435.

But little evidence can be recovered of the mutual relations of these two priories—probably there was some spice of rivalry, such as animates two neighbouring colleges or schools at the present day, and differences of opinion would naturally arise from time to time as to rights of property. A record however of an amicable arrangement has been preserved concerning their respective possessions in 1339, when a royal licence was issued by Edward III for the alienation in mortmain by the prior and convent of Pilton to the prior and convent of Barnstaple of 8/6 rent in Bradiford in exchange for three acres of meadow in Pilton.*

Again, a controversy having arisen in 1487 between our convent and the Dean and Chapter of Exeter concerning the right of possession of two acres of land and a part of a meadow at Blakclyff in West Anstey, the prior and monks, being satisfied that they could not make good their claim to their property, signed a release, declaring that they recognised the validity of the contention of the opposing party.†

Yet one more trouble arose—and that a somewhat serious one—when the existence of the priory was drawing near its end. This took the form of a conflict between the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities, being apparently a dispute as to jurisdiction. It appears that in obedience to a general

* *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1338-40, pp. 326, 548.
† *Exeter Chapter MSS.*, 1928.

command issued by the King and his Council for inquisition after miscreants, Philip Comer, who was deputy for an absent mayor, together with seven other officials proceeded to search various houses in Barnstaple; but while so employed late one night in Northgate Street, outside the walls of the town and in the neighbourhood of the priory, they were obstructed by John Favell, bailiff of Prior Robert Thorne, and a dozen other armed men, "arrayed with swordys byllys bowes and other wepyns invasive," who assaulted them and prevented them from performing their duty. The men were said to be prompted "by the abbetment mayntenance comfort and commandement of the seid Prior of Barnestaple," and therefore the mayor, Richard Haydon, petitions the King to summon the prior and the chief offenders to appear before his Majesty and the Council in the Star Chamber, and there to answer for themselves. A day was fixed for the trial at Westminster, but the result is not recorded; though the fact that Prior Thorne lived to resign his priory some eight years later, may be taken to indicate that his pleading was successful, or at least that he was not heavily condemned.*

St Mary Magdalene's Priory seems generally to have been singularly unsuccessful in its litigation; but no doubt such legal cases must have proved a boon in one way, for they would be a never failing

* Public Record Office, *Star Chamber Proceedings, Henry viii*, 23/251.

source of interest to the monks, and would afford an excitement, that would relieve the dulness and monotony of their retired and uneventful lives.

Excitement of a very different sort must have been caused by a great burglary committed about the year 1330, a burglary of so serious a nature that the King had to send instructions to the Sheriff of the county to investigate the case and to report to him. The affair was evidently a very big one, for his Majesty had been informed that as many as twenty-seven men had been indicted on the oath of twelve others with breaking into the priory and robbing it of money and goods of the value (in modern computation) of £2,400. Action had already been taken in the time of the Sheriff's predecessor, but without result, so the King charges him to prosecute enquiries and to send him information in four months' time. There seem however to have been special difficulties in the way, so that the Sheriff's inquisition was not held till six months had elapsed, and then the evidence appears to have broken down; so that we have to infer that our priory never got satisfaction, and the miscreants escaped punishment. The whole affair is mysterious, especially as the accused included many of the leading burgesses of Barnstaple, at least three of them having lately occupied the mayoral chair.*

Our priors figured very little—as far as we know—in public affairs away from Barnstaple, but

* *Barnstaple Records*, vol. 1, p. 151.

a couple of instances have been preserved in the records. One occurred in 1314, when Bishop Stapeldon appointed Prior John de Sancta Gemma to administer the office of the Prior of St James's, Exeter, during a somewhat prolonged vacancy.* The other was a more important and difficult business. It seems that in 1328 the benefice of Kingston near Taunton in the diocese of Wells had fallen vacant, and the Pope had granted it by a papal provision to Richard Rokebeare, while the Bishop either had instituted or was about to institute John Dichford. Somehow the case came for adjudication to Bishop Grandisson of Exeter, and he commissioned the same prior—who, though notorious for his crimes, was evidently a man of practical ability—to investigate the matter. The result was that Dichford held Kingston till 1337, and was then succeeded by Rokebeare; from which we may infer that our prior was no advocate of the papal pretensions, and did his best to check attempted encroachments on the rights of the national Church.†

We are enabled to form some idea of the financial condition of the priory by a reference to the *Taxation of Pope Nicholas IV*, dating from about 1290, which may be regarded as the commencement of the most prosperous period in monastic history in England. In that document the income of

* *Bishop Stapeldon's Register*, p. 214.
† *Bishop Grandisson's Register*, p. 339.

St Mary Magdalene's is reckoned at £3-6-8, which is equivalent to about £78 in modern value.* This was the lowest income of any conventual house in Devon, most of the other smaller foundations, such as Carswell, Frithelstock, Pilton, Totnes, and St James's, Exeter, having about half as much again; while Hartland Abbey's revenue was about £550 (modern value), Dunkeswell Abbey's £1,550, and Tavistock Abbey's £1740.† It is thus plain that Barnstaple Priory was the poorest of all the similar institutions of Devon, and its means seem quite inadequate for the support even of its few inmates.

The same condition was evidenced shortly before (in 1285), when Edward III granted to Thomas Crosse the care of the Priories of Otterton, Cowick, Totnes, Carswell, Modbury, and Barnstaple, which were assessed for a royal contribution, Barnstaple being the lowest—10 marks, while Carswell and Modbury ranked next with 16 marks, and then Totnes with 40 marks.‡

At the close of its career our priory had somewhat improved its position, being just about equal in means to Frithelstock and Totnes, while the receipts of the Priories of Pilton and Cornworthy were only half as much.§ Indeed its wealth must have increased very considerably, for in 1490 it was

Bishop Bronescombe's Register, p. 476. †Do., pp. 473-8.
‡*Memorials of Barnstaple*, J. B. Gribble, p. 74.
§Oliver's *Monasticon of Devon*.

able to launch out with lavish expenditure on the funeral of Prior John Pylton, which cost over £40 (modern value £600), the details being as follows:—

"Imprimis: We have payde out the sum of £14-8-6 for byldynge hys seypulture, and for makkin hys tumb, £14-8-6.

"Item: Mure, we have payede to the pryorey of Pyltone, and to the Muncks thir, to pray for his sole, £5-0-0.

"Item: Mure, we have payede for hys cuffyn, etc., the sum of £4, and to the Chauntrye ofe Synt Anne 8-8, £4-8-8.

"Item: Mure, wee have gyven away to pure of the Paroche of Barnestapoll, yn the Church of Synte Petrus ther on Sunday last, £2-3-4." *

The origin of Barnstaple Fair no man has been able to trace with any certainty. Local tradition indeed has it that the Fair was granted to the town by King Athelstan. But though in the reign of Edward III the burgesses made zealous and repeated attempts to induce the King to renew to them the charter which, they averred, had been issued by Athelstan but had unfortunately been lost, it is remarkable that they do not pretend that a Fair was among the privileges enumerated therein as having been conferred by that monarch.

* *Barnstaple Records*, vol. i, p. 130.

They do petition Edward III to sanction a four days' Fair, but they make no appeal to antiquity for this count, nor do they actually state that it was already in existence, although we know that it was.

We can only infer that the observance of the Fair sprang up under the protection of St Mary Magdalene's Priory, as is suggested by the dates mentioned in the several documents of the time of Edward III, which name the feast of St Mary Magdalene (July 22nd) and its eve and the two following days as the dates desired to be sanctioned by royal authority. The earliest mention of the Fair as actually established is to be found in the Inquisition held on August 21st, 1274, after the death of Henry de Tracy, who was Lord of the Manor of Barnstaple. The witnesses, who were cited, deposed that Barnstaple had a fair on the festival of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (September 8th), commencing at nine o'clock on the vigil and lasting to the hour of vespers on the day following the feast, the Fair being worth ten shillings a year (i.e., £12 in modern value) to the Lord of the Manor.* Later on (1534) it had been extended to four days, and it continued to be held in connection with the same festival until at least the end of the seventeenth century and probably longer.

The reason for the alteration of the observance from September 8th to September 19th has never

* *Harding MSS.* at Barnstaple, set 2, vol. 15.

been made clear ; but probably it was a consequence of the revision of the Calendar in 1752, when eleven days (September 3rd—13th) were entirely dropped, so that in that year there was no September 8th, but what would have been September 8th, was then reckoned as September 19th, a date that was observed in succeeding years.

In olden times the privilege of having a Fair was a valuable one, for the influx of people brought wealth to the town—and doubtless our priory enjoyed a share of the financial harvest. Probably the immense popularity of Barnstaple Fair in the present age involves the circulating of more money than was ever the case in the past ; so that if, as we suspect, the Fair was a result of the influence of the priory, Barnstaple may well regard St Mary Magdalene's with gratitude for having brought a permanent revenue to the town.

Although historical critics may cavil at the tradition that assigns the origin of the Fair to King Athelstan, his name will probably ever continue to be connected with it in popular opinion. We may therefore fittingly close our remarks on Barnstaple Fair by quoting the clever and amusing song, commemorating that tradition, which was written for the Barnstaple Pageant of 1914 by Mr A. L. D. Skinner, the words being put into the mouth of the Town-Crier, who proclaims the Fair.

Now, all you good people, come hearken to me,
King Athelstan bids me declare
This day of all others shall notable be
Through Devonshire, Cornwall, and over the sea,
As the founding of Barnstaple Fair.
The King he devised the affair,
The students of history swear;
So let us all sing
Long life to the King,
Who founded our Barnstaple Fair!

There are Honiton laces, and ribbons that gleam,
And woollens for wintery wear,
And sheep, and fat cattle, and fish from the stream,
And junket, and cider, and Devonshire cream,
To be bought at our Barnstaple Fair.
So banish all trouble and care,
And flock in your myriads there;
Loud praises recite
To the monarch of might,
Who founded our Barnstaple Fair.

The lads and the lasses they open their eyes
At the noise and the fun and the glare,
The merry-go-rounds and the cocoa-nut shies;
Ah! its right to be merry and wrong to be wise
When flocking to Barnstaple Fair.
Oh! I doubt if the King is aware
Of the joy that it gives to be there;
But I'll venture to bet
He will never forget
The founding of Barnstaple Fair.

Ye farmers of Torrington, join the refrain,
Combe Martin, Clovelly, and Croyde.
Let Ilfracombe hold not aloof in disdain,
Since envious Bideford sighs to obtain
What Barum so long has enjoyed.
Nay! Bideford cannot compare,
They never go pageanting there;
And in far Ilfracombe
They are plunged into gloom
With envy of Barnstaple Fair.

CHAPTER IV.

The Suppression and the dissolved Priory.

The Suppression of the smaller monasteries, *i.e.*, those whose annual income was under £200, was effected by Act of Parliament in 1536, the greater houses sharing the same fate three years later. Among the latter were included Plympton Priory and all the abbeys of Devonshire—Tavistock, Buckfastleigh, Ford, Tor, Hartland, Dunkeswell, Buckland, and Newenham; while Barnstaple and all the other Devonshire priories were included among the 376 religious houses of England and Wales that came within the scope of the earlier Act.

The annual revenue of our priory (£124-16-3, *i.e.*, about £1,500 in modern value) was derived from various sources. The prior and monks held manors at Barnstaple, Pilton, Instow, and Washford Pyne, and owned small properties also at Fremington, Heanton Punchardon, Georgeham, Marwood, Shirwell, Stoke Rivers, Kentisbury, Berrynarbor, Challacombe, Witheridge, West Anstey, Langtree, Bradiford (Pilton), and elsewhere.

They had the rectorial tithe (£4-10-0) and the patronage of the vicarage of Barnstaple. They received yearly payments of £5 from the Vicar of Barnstaple and from the Rector of Georgeham, £1-10-0 from the Rector of Fremington, and £2 from the Lord of Barnstaple Castle for providing a daily mass therein. Their two water-mills at Barnstaple, known as the Port Mills, brought in £10 a year.* And of course there was the priory itself with its out-buildings and land, special mention being made of its bell-tower and its cemetery. All these were surrendered into the hands of King Henry VIII, and became his property, to be retained in his own possession, or disposed of, as he might see fit.

Thus there disappeared one of the most prominent features of Barnstaple; one of its leading institutions ceased to exist; its chief ecclesiastical foundation was swept away, leaving a void in the religious life of the place, that nothing could fill; a chapter of local history, extending over several centuries, was at last closed; and good influence, example of piety, and a never-failing source of charity for the poor, were rudely and inexorably destroyed. Henceforth those who sought for spiritual guidance, for sacred services, for the inspiration to be derived from devoted lives, for material relief in time of trouble, and perhaps for a home of refuge in retirement from the world,

*Oliver's *Monasticon of Devon*, p. 203.

must seek elsewhere, and often seek in vain; for the work of Joel of Totnes, the great benefactor of Barnstaple, was forgotten, his generosity was heedlessly flung aside, and his high and holy aspiration had at last come to nought. And now there must ensue the ejection of those cowled and tonsured men of God, the desecration of the holy site, the ruin and decay of the ancient and hallowed walls, and the rifling of the tomb and the scattering of the bones of the devoted and revered founder of the Priory of St Mary Magdalene of Barnstaple.

We are left to picture for ourselves the scene when on February 4th, 1536, for the last time the conventual porter swung open the great door of the priory gateway, and Prior Thorne and his black-habited monks filed out, delivering up the ponderous key to the King's commissioners, and then—never to return again—departed from their old home, making their way through the crowd of sympathizers and the tearful poor to seek for themselves lodgings in the town. Nor have we any more certain guide than our imagination to tell us what happened to the brethren, turned adrift on the world with no more helpful preparation for making a livelihood than what they had learned in the monastery.

Each monk would receive some small pittance annually towards his maintenance, but we are unable to ascertain either the number of the monks at the time of the Suppression (Pilton Priory had

only three besides the prior) or the amount of their pensions. We know, however, that Robert Thorne the Prior was granted by the King an annuity of £15 (£180 in modern value) "for life or until he shall have been advanced by us to a benefice or any other worthy promotion of the clear yearly value of £15 or more"; * and he is stated to have held the chaplaincy of St George's Chantry in Barnstaple, which would doubtless increase his income. He survived the Dissolution for twenty years, and, dying in the year 1556 (a duplicate entry in the registers gives the date as 1660) at the age of 70, was buried in Barnstaple church or churchyard. It is further recorded that a few days before his death, a dispute having arisen as to whether the occupants of the priory were to pay the dues known as the "Quindecim" (a tax of a fifteenth), he signed a formal statement declaring that such had ever been customary.†

But though we cannot certainly identify any of the other monks, we probably have the names of some of them in a list of pensioners of Barnstaple Priory in 1555. This list seems to include the surviving recipients of corrodies from the revenues of the convent as well as monks (and perhaps other persons too) who had been receiving annuities since the Suppression, but unfortunately the document fails to distinguish them from one another.

Miscellaneous Books (Augmentation Office), 244, p. 7.

†*Barnstaple Records*, vol. 1, p. 130; vol. 2, pp. 31, 39.

The largest sum then (£3-6-8) was that granted to William Dawkyn, who figures in the Barnstaple Records as a person of influence—being at one time Mayor of the borough, and acting as a trustee of property, and as one of the town's representatives who handed over the Church's goods to the King's commissioners, and as the organist of the parish church.* Another pensioner was John Faibell or Favell, who received £2 a year. He had been for many years bailiff of the manor, and he was the official appointed to account for the lands of the dissolved priory after the attainder of Lord William Howard in 1541. The others were Nicholas Warlande, whose annuity was £2, Peter Campion (£1-6-8), John Berye (£1), Thomas Southbrake (10/-), John Howchin (6/8), and John Birde (3/4).

One person whose name we might have expected to find in the list of recipients of pensions, but who does not figure there, is Sir Hugh Pollard, Recorder of Barnstaple, who had been appointed by Prior John Pylton and his brethren to hold for his life the office of Steward of the Priory, and who afterwards continued in his post when the property was secularized. It is noteworthy however that at the time of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of Henry VIII he was enjoying an annual stipend of £1-6-8 from the conventual revenues, and also that in 1555 the Pilton Priory estates were charged with a payment

Barnstaple Records, vol. 1, pp. 157, 192, 198, 200, 211, 212; vol. 2, p. 96.

of 20/- for "Hugh Pollard, late chief steward by patent of the convent." *

Evidently Sir Hugh was regarded as one deserving of all possible consideration, and the town of Barnstaple was wont to lavish upon him delightful presents of wine (at 8d. or 10d. a gallon), a loaf of sugar (at 9/6), a pound of pepper (at 2/6), a pound of ginger (at 3/-), and a breakfast (costing 1/8), or a dinner (for 6/8).†

The priory estates were coveted by Lord Lisle, who in April 1536 wrote to his friend John Hussey to beg that he would ask Mr Norrys to move the King to bestow on him "the priory of Maudylin of Barstabyll," promising to pay to his Majesty the goodly sum of £20 as a New Year's gift. This his friend undertook to do, though he added his opinion that some other Church property in Hampshire or Wiltshire, near his own home, would be more suitable to him than "the priories of Mawdlens and Pylton." Whether Lord Lisle took the hint or not we do not know, but in any case the grant of Barnstaple was not offered to him, and after the lapse of two years (on March 9th, 1538) St Mary Magdalene's Priory with all its rights and possessions was granted by King Henry VIII to Lord William Howard and Margaret his wife (a daughter of Sir Thomas Gamage of Coity in Glamorganshire).‡ It does not appear that the

Ministers' Accounts, Henry VIII, 592.
†*Barnstaple Records*, vol. 2, pp. 105, 120.
‡*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. 10, 708, 952, 1238; vol. 13 (1), 646 (13).

Howards had previously any special interest in Barnstaple, but the favour seems to have been simply a recognition of services and loyalty to the King, who had employed Lord William on many missions of trust and importance. Indeed he was a man of high standing, being a son of Thomas Howard, second Duke of Norfolk, and at the time of the grant was in Scotland on the King's ecclesiastical business. He was afterwards by Queen Mary created Lord Howard of Effingham, and was the father of Charles, Lord Effingham, Lord High Admiral of England at the time of the Spanish Armada.*

The Borough Records show that a couple of years later Lord William fell foul of the town authorities on a question of jurisdiction, having claimed the right to regulate trade and to keep order and to punish misdemeanours in a certain unnamed street (probably Boutport) in Barnstaple. This claim was resisted by the town, and the borough still preserves a formal protest, endorsed by the mayor and his twenty-four councillors, and addressed "to all offysers and mynysters ender our Soveren lorde the King." This seems to have been the last word on the subject, unless we are to believe that the case dragged on for four or five years, till the time when the town paid 16/4 for a dinner given to the Earl of Bath and Sir Hugh Pollard the Recorder, "when they sat on the Com-

*Oliver's *Monasticon*, p. 203.

mission between the town and my Lord William Howard"; but in any case we may infer that the townsmen carried the day.*

From the original grantee the property descended to his son the Lord High Admiral, and then in 1607 to the latter's son, William, Lord Howard, Earl of Nottingham, who six years later conveyed the priory domain to Reginald Portree. One of his daughters by her marriage brought a part of the estate to the Sydenham family, from whom it passed to the Northmores, Thomas Northmore having married Mary, daughter of T. Sydenham of Ilfracombe in 1690.†

Portree's other daughter, Mary, the widow of Owen Feltham, in 1699 sold in two portions to Richard Barnes and to Richard Cornish, both of Barnstaple, "the site and ruins of the demolished priory-house and gardens called St Mary Magdalene *alias* Maudlin."‡

Richard Barnes's moiety, which included the actual site of the priory, descended through his daughter Mary, who married the Reverend John Boyse of Horwood in 1730, to their son Christopher Boyse. He, having no issue, in 1784 settled the estate on his wife's kinswoman, Miss Elizabeth Jane Dene, from whom it came by purchase to Mr Thomas

**Barnstaple Records*, vol. 2, p. 120.

†Gribble, p. 27; *Barnstaple Records*, vol. 2, p. 214.

‡Oliver's *Monasticon*, p. 197.

Palmer Acland. The moiety of Richard Cornish descended to his grand-daughter Margaret Cornish, and she in 1728 married Alexander Hooper, who sold it to the Reverend John Boyse in 1747. His son Thomas Boyse and grandson the Reverend John Boyse inherited it in turn, and the latter parted with it in 1831 to Mr Thomas Palmer Acland, who resided there in the house in Boutport Street known as Rackfield House. Meanwhile the Boyses had held land behind that house—the field known as Maudlin Rack Close. This too was purchased by Mr T. P. Acland, who thus was the possessor of the whole property, which he bequeathed on his death in 1844 to his cousin, Sir Thomas Acland, Baronet, of Killerton. By him or by his son Sir Charles Thomas Dyke Acland the whole of their Barnstaple property was parted with, the residence in Boutport Street being sold to Dr Budd, the tannery and Rackfield Cottages (*i.e.*, the site of the greater part of the priory buildings) to Messrs J. C. and W. H. Smyth, and in 1902 the bulk of the remainder, including the existing remains of the priory, to Mr Charles H. Symons of Saunton, the present possessor. Mr Symons's property, about six acres in extent, is now known as the Rackfield Estate, and stretches from Boutport Street to Charles Street (including both sides of the latter), and from Vicarage Street to the River Yeo; but the priory lands, which were anciently entitled the Maudlin Easter Close and the Prior's Beare, were

more extensive, and used to include the greater part of Derby.*

It is evident that the priory buildings, or some portion of them, were adapted to the requirements of a mansion, which served for more than a century as a suitable place for the lodging of distinguished visitors. The Recorder, Sir Hugh Pollard, held his court "at Maudelyn" in 1544-5, on which occasion the town granted him a gallon of wine and half a pound of sugar at the expense of 1/10;† and for the assizes of 1590 (when eighteen prisoners were condemned to be hanged on the Castle Green) the Sheriff was lodged "at Mawdlene."‡ The last mention of the house is in 1709, when the Church Rate-book has a reference to "the occupier of Maudlyn Rack-close."§ There are also just a few incidental allusions to the place:—the old boundaries of the town, as detailed in 1555, ran "along the streate before the prioure's gate, called Magdalene Passe;"‖ "the Lord of Mawdlyn" received from the town 6/- for a high rent in 1614-5; and Thomas Westcote in his *View of Devonshire*, published in 1630, says that it is "called now The Magdalen."**

The mansion house has long since entirely disappeared, and there are scarcely any remains of the conventual buildings; though the removal of

*J. R. Chanter's *Memorials*, p. 149.
†*Barnstaple Records*, vol. 2, p. 120.
‡Wyot's *Diary*, p. 96.
§Gribble, p. 531.
‖*Barnstaple Records*, vol. 2, p. 172.
**Edition of 1845, page 298.

heaps of *débris* in 1819, in the preparation of a site for the building of a tan-yard and cottages in the north-west corner of the precinct, exposed the foundations of many walls of the old priory.* There is now left only a part of one block, which has been preserved because it has proved useful from having been converted into two dwelling-houses.

It was for long thought that the fabric of the priory had been entirely destroyed; but about thirty-five years ago some ancient work was noticed in a couple of houses near Boutport Street (at the entrance of the present Coronation Street), and a careful investigation proved that here, incorporated in these modern dwellings, are considerable portions of a range of buildings belonging to the ancient priory. The remains comprise the east and north walls together with the eastern part of the south wall, and show that the edifice was a small building, eighty-eight feet long (including walls and buttresses) and thirty-two feet wide. It consisted of eight bays, each measuring ten feet, the divisions being marked by shallow buttresses of twelfth century type, and it appears to have been a two-storied edifice. In the north wall (in the third bay from the east) is an original door-way, but other existing openings may be due to modern requirements. The structure seems to have been a detached one, standing a little distance to the south-west of the main building, and to have been

**Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 96, p. 17.

one of the subsidiary parts of the priory, the thickness of the walls (about four feet) suggesting that the upper floor may have been the granary, the lower part serving for the accommodation of other stores.

The remains have been identified as the priory church, but not only do the proportions (eighty feet by twenty-four internally) militate against this theory, but the dimensions are two small for such a purpose. A religious house of the twelfth century, even a small one, would be provided as its principal building with a dignified church of generous size—indeed it is a matter for marvel, how magnificent and extensive were the conventual churches of that age. We are told very little about this particular church, but we do know that it was worthy of commendation, for the official Visitation of 1279 described it as "bona, fortis, et pulcra"; and the excavations of 1819 brought to light "fragments of columns and ribs of groins,"* which would most naturally have belonged to the church, and would point to its having had arcades and a vaulted roof. Furthermore we read of the interment within its walls of a number of distinguished persons, such as the founder, Joel of Totnes; Philip de Columbars, Lord of Barnstaple Castle, and his wife Alianora (Eleanor); some of the Barons of Slane in Ireland; and Prior John Pylton, whose tomb cost in 1490 the great sum of £28-17-0 (in modern

**Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 96, p. 17.

value £433). Doubtless many more of the priors as well as of other rich or influential persons were buried there, and we hear of the finding among the ruins of the effigy of a cross-legged knight* and a stone coffin. And besides, it would accord with what was customary elsewhere that the people of Barnstaple should much frequent the priory church, attending its services, being married there, having their children baptized at its font, and at their death being buried in the general cemetery. All of which tends to show that the priory church was of ample dimensions—much more so than the small and very narrow structure that has survived the destruction of the rest of the foundation.

Again, the existing building is of rude workmanship, the stones, both within and without, being rough and uneven; whereas we should certainly expect smoother and more refined work, as well as a more pretentious portal, in a building designed for so high and holy a purpose. Moreover the fact that buttresses were provided to support at least three of its sides may be taken to denote that this edifice was not part of a group of buildings, as a conventual church would be; and it would be strange indeed that the church should have no east window—for a buttress against the middle of the east wall, and the absence of any sign of any window openings in that wall, prove that no such window has ever existed.

*Polwhele's *History of Devonshire*, vol. 3, p. 404.

Thus there being no indications of its having been a church, and the arguments against such identification being so many and so weighty, we feel that that theory must be abandoned, and we prefer to recognise in this existing fabric the granary or one of the other domestic buildings of the priory, or the guest-house (whose normal position would be near the gate-way), or possibly the prior's residence.

Of other remains of the priory hardly anything survives. It seems probable that the old worked granite, which forms the coping of the wall beside the road across Yeo Vale, originally formed part of the conventual buildings, and doubtless the stones of many Barnstaple edifices came from the same place. But besides we know of nothing save two coats-of-arms, carved in stone, which came to light during the excavations of 1819, and were fixed into the east wall of Rackfield House in Boutport Street, which was built just after that date.

One of these (surrounded by the motto "Honi soit qui mal y pense," and differenced by a crescent) is the shield of Henry Stafford, Knight of the Garter, who was created Earl of Wiltshire by Henry VII in 1509. He was the second son of the well-known Henry Stafford, second Duke of Buckingham, who was executed at Salisbury in 1483 for conspiring against the King, and his elder brother Edward, the third Duke, was beheaded in 1521 by Henry VIII. Though twice married—to Muriel

Grey, daughter of Viscount Lisle, and to Cicely Bonville, Marchioness of Dorset—he left no issue, and dying in 1523, the title became extinct. As a descendant of Thomas of Woodstock, sixth son of Edward III, he was entitled to quarter his own arms (or, a chevron gules) with the royal arms of England; his other quarterings being those of Bohun, Earl of Hereford (azure, a bend argent between two cotises and six lions rampant or), and of Bohun, Earl of Northampton (the same as above, but differenced by having on the bend three mullets sable); for Thomas of Woodstock had married Eleanor, elder daughter and co-heiress of Humphrey de Bohun, who was seventh Earl of Hereford as heir of his uncle Humphrey de Bohun, and was also second Earl of Northampton in succession to his father.* The Earl of Wiltshire was an honoured visitor in Barnstaple between 1512 and 1514, as we know from the Borough Records, in which there is mention of the payment of 10d. for a gallon of wine "for my Lord Wyltshire," and of 3s. 4d. to "John Warren for riding to my lord of Wyltshire," and of 15s. "for certain things that were given to my lord of Wyltshyre, and wine that was given to his gentleman."† Presumably he was a generous benefactor of our priory, and therefore his coat-of-arms was carved on some part of the buildings. The same arms are to be seen

* *The Strife of the Roses and Days of the Tudors in the West*, W. H. H. Rogers, pp. 74, 87-117, 174.

†*Barnstaple Records*, vol. 2, pp. 105, 125.

too on his stall-plate in St George's Chapel at Windsor; and on a boss in the vaulting of the choir there, and also in the churches of Ottery St Mary, Axminster, and Seaton, appears his badge—a Stafford knot argent, differenced by a crescent sable.*

The other coat-of-arms is that of the priory, adopted from the family of Columbars, one of whom, Philip Columbars, had been Lord of the castle and borough of Barnstaple in right of his wife Eleanor, who was a great-grand-daughter of Henry, Lord Tracy, a former holder. Philip Columbars died in 1342 without issue, leaving his nephew James de Audley as his heir; and having, by virtue of his lordship of Barnstaple, been patron of the priory, and probably a generous benefactor to that foundation, St Mary Magdalene's had not only the honour of burying his body and his wife's in the conventual church, but also enjoyed the privilege of using his armorial bearings—gules, a bend or, over all a label of three points in chief argent.†

Unfortunately there are not sufficient data to enable us to reconstruct the plan of the priory. We can only infer that the main buildings occupied the site of the present Rackfield Cottages and the ground to the east thereof. A little further east again a number of graves have been found, which

*_The Strife of the Roses_, W. H. H. Rogers, p. 74.
†Oliver's _Monasticon_, p. 196.

would seem to mark the monks' burial-ground—the normal position of which would be outside the east end of the church. From this it would appear —though the suggestion is only tentative—that the west side of the quadrangle (with its upper story used as the monks' dormitory) stood where the Rackfield Cottages now are; and that the south side was formed by the church, whose site is bounded on the south by the lane that runs behind the houses of Coronation Street. The north side, opposite the church, would comprise the refectory, and the chapter-house would be set in the middle of the east wing. The cloisters would be built against the interior walls of the quadrangle, and the square space in the middle would be cultivated as a cloister-garth. The general cemetery extended from the priory buildings in a southward direction, as is proved not only by the unearthing of human remains in the middle of George Street, but also by the somewhat precise description of the position of the cemetery in an extant deed of 1344, which records the sale by Lawrence Large of his house in Boutport Street to Robert Skyber, the said house and its curtilage being situated to the west of the cemetery of St Mary Magdalene's.*

*Barnstaple Borough Records, No. 412.

CHAPTER V.

The building of St Mary Magdalene's Church.

Barnstaple in the year 1842 being a parish of about 8,000 inhabitants, with only one church and one burial-ground for Church-people, the need for additional accommodation, both for the living and for the dead, must often have been felt and discussed. Indeed eighteen years before a committee had been formed, consisting of the Mayor (Mr J. Marshall), the Vicar (the Reverend H. Luxmoore), Mr Robert Budd, Mr J. Law, and Mr E. R. Roberts, who had obtained plans for a chapel-of-ease, which they proposed to erect in the Square, it being anticipated that a considerable sum of money could be raised by the sale of pews (six sittings for £20) and burial-vaults (at £20 each).

This scheme having failed, Mr George Potts of Trafalgar Lawn in 1835 petitioned the Mayor and Corporation to assign him a portion of the Square for the erecting thereon of a church, upon which he proposed to expend the sum of £2000. His petition was favourably received, a resolution

being passed to the effect that "the Square be granted to Her Majesty's Commissioners for Building Churches as a site for erecting a chapel-of-ease for the parish of Barnstaple," and a committee was appointed for the purpose, consisting of the Mayor (Mr E. R. Roberts), the Vicar (the Reverend H. Luxmoore), Mr Robert Budd, and Mr H. Drake. But it was afterwards found that the action of the Town Council was *ultra vires*, and consequently the scheme was abandoned.

As far as can be discovered, the credit of being the first to moot the question again is due to Mr Gilbert Knill Cotton, Mayor and Churchwarden of Barnstaple, who expressed to Mr George L. Abbott, a local architect, his wish to see another church provided for the town. This was reported, probably by Mr Abbott, to the Reverend John James Scott, a young clergyman, who had recently been Assistant Curate of Countisbury, and at that time was Curate-in-charge of Wollaston in Northamptonshire, but who shortly afterwards became Curate-in-charge of Pilton, close to Barnstaple; and it is to him, as the originator and for a while the chief promoter of the scheme, that we are indebted for the first step in the formation of our parish and the building of our church.

The movement was started by a munificent offer of £2000 from Mr Scott, which prompted the Mayor to convene a public meeting of the in-

habitants of Barnstaple and its vicinity to consider his proposals. The meeting, held in the Guildhall on Thursday, July 7th, at 3 o'clock, was presided over by the Mayor, and was attended by a numerous and influential company, which included the Lord Bishop of Exeter (Dr Henry Phillpotts) and the Archdeacon of Barnstaple (the Venerable George Barnes). A resolution, affirming the want of sufficient accommodation in the parish church and the opinion of the meeting that the liberal offer of Mr Scott should be accepted, was moved by the Vicar, and was supported by the Bishop in a remarkably out-spoken and pointed speech. He said that he was struck with the painful appearance which the interior of Barnstaple Church presented, in that it was now a place of worship only for the renters of pews, the poor being practically excluded, and dishonestly robbed of their first and highest privilege. He assured every one who was the owner of an appropriated pew in that church that, while it continued as it was, shut against the poor, he was guilty of robbery; that he had no more right to his appropriated pew, while the poor were without accommodation, than the poor had to claim and seize upon his own proper wealth. He spoke especially to those who occupied appropriated pews: they owed a debt, they should do something considerable, their contributions should be more than a few pounds—more than the trifling sum which many of them expended often in one year

in the pleasures of a day's entertainment. Here was a demand which as Christians and as honest men they were bound to meet and to satisfy.*

Mr Scott's proposals had already gained the approval of the Vicar and the Churchwardens, and also of the Archdeacon, and were therefore brought before the meeting in the form of an agreement, which was dated June 6th, 1842—a memorable date, as marking the inception of the scheme that resulted in the starting of St Mary Magdalene's. In this agreement it was proposed that a church should be built in the parish of Barnstaple on a site to be approved of by the Vicar and Churchwardens and Mr Scott; that for the building of the church, which was to contain 1,200 sittings, the parish was to raise £2000; that the architect should be nominated by Mr Scott, and the plans be subject to the approval of the Bishop, the Archdeacon, and the Church Commissioners; that Mr Scott should give £1500 for the endowment and £500 for the fittings and furniture of the church; and that the right of presentation to the church should be secured to Mr Scott and his heirs for forty years. Mr Scott was evidently urgent for speedy action, for he further stipulated that half of the £2000 was to be secured by Michaelmas Day, and that the first stone was to be laid before the close of the year. All went well at the meeting. It was unanimously resolved that

Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, July 9th and 16th, 1842.

Mr Scott's "liberal offer and terms be immediately and thankfully accepted"; that subscriptions be sought without delay, and application be made to the Church Building Societies; and that the Vicar and Churchwardens, with power to add to their number, be a committee for carrying the resolutions of the meeting into effect.

Thus the scheme was happily and hopefully launched, the piloting thereof being entrusted to the three leaders, who called to their aid seven others as members of the committee.

Of those three, who may be described as our Founders, both because the movement originated with them, and because they had the chief influence and responsibility in working out the scheme, a few words must be added, in order that their memory may ever be cherished in the parish that they so greatly benefited.

The Reverend Henry Luxmoore was a member of an old Devonshire family, the senior branch, of which the early-nineteenth-century Bishop John Luxmoore of St Asaph was the representative, being settled at Okehampton. Henry was the eldest son of the Reverend Coryndon Luxmoore, Rector of Bridestowe, and was born in his father's rectory in 1794. He was educated at Blundell's School, Tiverton, and at Winchester, and graduated at St John's College, Cambridge. He was a young man with very little experience of clerical work—

having been ordained to the curacy of Inwardleigh only the year before—when the Earl of Wharncliffe in 1820 appointed him to be Vicar of Barnstaple. However he proved a success here—he was a good preacher of written sermons, and a kind and diligent visitor of the poor, and his people liked his big and burly form and his hearty manner. His great zeal and devotion in promoting the formation of our parish and the building of our church are referred to elsewhere, as well as the generosity of himself and his family, whose contributions amounted to £84; and we like to think of him as the leader and the chief actor in the whole movement, and to picture him to ourselves as officiating at the laying of the foundation-stone and at the consecration services of our church. After holding his benefice for thirty-nine years he retired from Barnstaple on account of advancing years, leaving behind him a good reputation. He then for sixteen years held the benefice of Everdon in Northamptonshire, where he died and was buried in June 1876 at the ripe age of eighty-two.

Mr Gilbert Knill Cotton was descended from an old Cornish stock, and was born in Bristol, being a son of Mr William Cotton of that city, who afterwards settled in Barnstaple, and carried on business as a spirit-merchant. The son became a prosperous chemist here, building and occupying a spacious house at the top of Cross Street, next door to his father's premises. He bore a high reputation for

life and character, and fully deserved the honour done him by his fellow-townsmen, who chose him as their Mayor in 1841; and by the *North Devon Journal*, which spoke of him as one who "for a long series of years stood high in the commercial circles of his native town; a man of known probity and unsullied honour, warm in his friendships, generous in his sympathies, kind and affable to all; it was his lot to fill every parochial and civil office of trust and responsibility, and in each and all he was found faithful." * He was Churchwarden of Barnstaple in 1840, 1841, and 1842; and one chief reason for the Reverend J. J. Scott's urgency in trying to hasten the commencement of the new church, was that he desired that Mr Cotton should enjoy the distinction of having the foundation-stone laid during his mayoralty. This indeed could not be, but Mr Cotton threw himself into the scheme with remarkable energy and self-sacrifice. He attended almost every meeting of the Committee during the five years of its existence; he subscribed £25 to the building fund, and paid also £16-8-6 towards wiping off the final deficit; he moved his father to contribute £25, and his brother to provide the altar; and he gave the weather-cock, which he is said to have with his own hands set in position on the spire. Retiring from business in consequence of an attack of paralysis, he removed to London, where he died on March 23rd, 1868, at the

* *Journal*, March 26th, 1868.

age of sixty-six, and his body was brought home and buried in Pilton churchyard.

Mr. William Snow was a scion of the Snows of Exmoor, who migrated from Somerset to Devon a couple of centuries ago. Settling in Barnstaple, he took a prominent part in town affairs, serving as Way-warden, Overseer, and a Commissioner under the Barnstaple Improvement Act. He was best known however for the boarding school for boys, which he established at his residence at Vicarage Lawn, whose extensive grounds reached to the churchyard of St Mary Magdalene's, with a private door facing the west entrance of the church. Here were educated many of the sons of North Devon clergy, gentry, and yeomen, a good number of whom passed on to Public Schools. Mr Snow had a decided personality—a little man, strongly built, determined and purposeful, with prominent nose and piercing eyes. A rough and hard lot was that of his boys, for the fare was of the simplest, and the discipline rigidly strict, with no sparing of the rod in school-room or in dormitory or in play-ground, but the Head was generally acknowledged to have been successful as a teacher. With Mr Cotton he was appointed Churchwarden of Barnstaple in 1840, 1841, and 1842; and having done his share in the business of founding our parish and church (to the cost of which he gave £35), he served as one of the early churchwardens of St Mary Magdalene's, and used to attend the services

with his boys. He died at Vicarage Lawn in 1867 at the age of sixty-eight, and his grave is in our churchyard, near the south door-way, so that most of the worshippers pass his tomb as they go into the church that he took so large a part in providing for them.

Their companions on the Committee were leading men in Barnstaple:—Mr William Avery was a woollen draper and three times Mayor, Mr Richard Bremridge was a solicitor and afterwards Member of Parliament for the borough, Mr Charles Carter was a solicitor, Mr John Law was a banker and merchant, Mr John Mackrell was a chemist, Mr John Marshall was a banker and three times Mayor, and Mr Edward Richards Roberts was a gentleman, who built and resided at Fort Hill House. Mr J. Marshall was appointed treasurer of the fund, and Mr John Baker of Northgate (the Borough Treasurer and Bridge Chamberlain) generously undertook the important and arduous duties of secretary for the stipend of £5 per annum —duties which he appears to have performed faithfully and well. Later there were added to the Committee the Archdeacon of Barnstaple, Mr John Sherard Clay (solicitor, on his becoming Mayor in the following year), Mr George Harris (merchant), Mr John Thomas Lock (churchwarden and linen draper), and the Reverend James Pycroft (first Vicar of St Mary Magdalene's).

To these fifteen committeemen is due a great debt of gratitude—a debt that, so far as we know,

has never been duly acknowledged—for their successful management of a considerable undertaking, which was beset by unforeseen and threatening difficulties and disappointments. Several of them showed rare zeal by the regularity of their attendance at the Committee meetings, 77 in number—Mr Luxmoore, who was generally the chairman, being absent only thrice, and Mr Cotton, who was chairman during his mayoralty, only five times; while Mr E. R. Roberts, Mr J. Marshall, and Mr W. Snow, all in like manner proved their devotion to the cause.

The Committee's energy certainly ensured a good start for the scheme; hundreds of copies of their appeal were printed by J. Brightwell of High Street; and very soon they were able to announce a very promising list of subscriptions in the two Barnstaple newspapers (the *County and North Devon Advertiser* and the *North Devon Journal*), and in the *Western Times*, the *Western Summary*, and the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (all of them published at Exeter), the stipulated £1000 being raised by Michaelmas Day. Furthermore pieces of land in various localities were offered or suggested for purchase as suitable for the erection of the proposed church; and one of these, known as the Lady Meadow, was selected by the Committee, and Mr George L. Abbott was instructed to prepare a plan, some preliminary excavations being started on the site.

Soon however difficulties arose, chiefly owing to the unwise and ill-considered actions of Mr Scott, who was too desirous of pressing on the commencement of the church. He it was who was responsible for the work done in the Lady Meadow —work that was premature, for the property had not been conveyed, besides which, the Church Building Societies' regulations required all plans and estimates to have been submitted to them before any work could be commenced. Also it was now discovered that the reserving of the patronage to Mr Scott and his heirs would constitute a barrier in the way of obtaining any grants from those Societies. And again, Mr Abbott's proposed design was found to be impracticable, for his church would cost at least £5000, which was far more than the Committee had any expectation of being able to raise for the building. It appears then that Mr Scott and the Committee were working at cross purposes, the Committee endeavouring to act in loyalty to their trust, while Mr Scott was taking independent action.

Mr Scott then formulated fresh proposals, which seemed likely to prove acceptable; but then he suddenly withdrew them, and, declaring that his offer would be made elsewhere, advised the Committee to return their contributions to the subscribers. A few days later however Mr Scott made another offer; but his stipulations were so exacting and so unsatisfactory, that the Committee

found themselves obliged on January 19th, 1843, to pass a unanimous resolution that "the conditions are such as it would be impossible for them to carry out, and they therefore cannot recommend them to the consideration and adoption of the subscribers."

Thus ended Mr Scott's connection with this scheme—a scheme that owed its inauguration to him, and for the promotion of which he had been prepared to act with such splendid generosity. He now left Barnstaple, having lost his curacy at Pilton owing to the resignation of the Vicar, the Reverend William Cradock Hall—which indeed was one reason for his withdrawal of his offer. He also felt aggrieved at the failure to carry through his scheme and at having involved himself in considerable expense. But even then Barnstaple was not to lose his liberality; for ere long he was back again, and, with even greater munificence, built and endowed a church at his own sole expense, dedicating it to the Holy Trinity, and himself becoming its first vicar.

Meanwhile the Committee, encouraged by the Bishop and the Archdeacon, and happily freed from all trammelling conditions, made a fresh start. The subscribers were called together on February 15th in the Guildhall under the chairmanship of Ex-Mayor Cotton, the Committee was re-appointed and invested with full power to act, and a new appeal for subscriptions was issued, it

being announced that £1911 had already been subscribed, and that there was good prospect of a sufficient endowment being provided by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

There followed prolonged negotiations concerning a site for the proposed church, and for several months all the Committee's efforts to effect a satisfactory arrangement were baffled. At last however on November 27th, 1843, a letter from Mr William Law was laid before the Committee, offering to sell "a piece of ground on the north side of his garden wall, including the boundaries, the houses now standing on it, and the approach from Bear Street." Mr Law, it may be mentioned, was a tanner and a builder of houses, and his residence was beside the entrance to the churchyard—the two houses now numbered 21 and 22 Bear Street. This offer was thankfully accepted by the Committee, who agreed to his price of £500, and at once marked out a district to form the new parish, subject to the approval of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners—which was to bear the name of St Mary Magdalene. This is the first mention of the name, which seems to have suggested itself naturally to the Committee, the greater part of the site of the ancient Priory of St Mary Magdalene being within the boundaries of the district, and distant only about 250 yards from the plot of ground where the new church was to be placed; while Higher Maudlin Street and Lower Maudlin Street—named

after the Priory—are almost within a stone's throw of the north end of the same. It was indeed a happy inspiration that prompted this revival of the old dedication, thus supplying an interesting link between the Church of England of mediæval times and of the present. Designs for the new church were received from six architects, and on the advice of the Camden Society and the Architectural Society of Exeter those of Mr Benjamin Ferrey of London were accepted.

Meanwhile the land had been conveyed from Mr Law to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. It consisted of a field, situated behind Mr Law's house in Bear Street, with entrances from Vicarage Lane (now Vicarage Street) on the north and Bear Street on the south, and having on it a coach-house and other buildings, a tan-yard, a well, and also a saw-pit. In order to safeguard Mr Law's rights and to show him all possible consideration the Committee on February 19th, 1844, consented to the following agreement:—that during the progress of the work the north entrance alone should be used for the passing of workmen and materials; that for the next twelve years there should be no constant thoroughfare across the property, but that entrance gates should be erected, and should be kept closed against the public, except at such times as the church should be in use; that for the same period burials should, as far as possible, be limited to the northern part of the churchyard, and should

enter by the north gateway; and that the walls abutting on Mr Law's gardens on either side should not be removed or lowered.

From this time the work proceeded uninterruptedly and prosperously. Substantial sums were granted by the Societies for Building Churches—£500 from Her Majesty's Commissioners, £500 from the Diocesan Association, and £400 from the Incorporated Society, and also a royal gift of £20 from Adelaide, the Queen Dowager and widow of William IV. Tenders were accepted from Mr Thomas Curtis to do the excavators' and rough masons' work for £702, from Mr William Gammon to do the carpenters' and joiners' work for £860, and from Mr Simon Rowe to do the freestone masons' work for £982; Sir Arthur Chichester gave permission for stone to be taken from his quarry near Westaway on the road to Shirwell; chest-nut timber was purchased at King's Nympton for £100; and Mr G. Slade of Dorchester was appointed clerk of the works at a salary of 34/- a week.

A great event was the laying of the foundation-stone on October 23rd, 1844, the ceremony being performed by the Archdeacon of Barnstaple (the Venerable George Barnes), who was attended by the Apparitor and the clergy of the parish (the Reverend Messrs H. Luxmoore, James Harris, and George Johnston), in the presence of the Mayor (Alderman Latham), the Recorder (Mr W. M.

Praed), the Town Council, thirty or forty of the neighbouring clergy, and a numerous gathering of subscribers and inhabitants of Barnstaple. So important was this event in our history that every detail concerning it must be of deep interest, and we therefore print here the contents of the placard that was issued to give notice of the proceedings:—

The New District
Church
of
St Mary Magdalene
In the Parish of Barnstaple.
The Parishioners and Subscribers to the Church
are informed that
The Foundation Stone
of the Building
Will (D.V.) be laid by the Venerable The Archdeacon
on Wednesday next the 23rd instant.

After the usual Morning Service in the Parish Church, the Committee and Persons desirous of accompanying the Archdeacon will assemble at the Guildhall at 12 o'clock, and proceed with him to the Site. It is proposed to observe the following order:—

The School Children
The Organist and Singers
The Municipal Authorities
The Clerk of the Works and Contractors
The Architect
The Committee

The Clergy of the Parish
The Churchwardens
The Archdeacon
The Clergy of the Neighbourhood
Subscribers and Parishioners.
Carriages will be admitted, through the Bear-Street Entrance, to the Ground.

October, 1844.

On arrival at the ground, where a platform had been erected, prayer was offered and the Vicar delivered an address; after which an inscription on parchment, written by Mr Richard Sharland, master of a private school in Barnstaple, and some new silver coins (a crown, a half-crown, a shilling, and a sixpence) were deposited in the foundation stone, and covered by a copper plate bearing a Latin inscription, engraved by John Mallett.

The Archdeacon then adjusted the stone with the usual formalities, and, laying his hand upon it, declared:—"In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, for the confession of the true faith, and upon the rock whereon Christ has built his Church that the gates of Hell should not prevail against it, we lay this foundation stone of a Church to be called St Mary Magdalene in the parish of Barnstaple, a memorial of the faith which worketh by love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Other prayers followed, the chief one being this:—"Pour down, we beseech thee, the abundance of thy mercy upon this our work of faith

and charity; and as thou hast thus far prospered our designs, so continue to aid and bless us, that we may be enabled to accomplish that which thou hast put into our minds to undertake; and make this thy House of Prayer, through the sanctification of thy Spirit, a blessing to ourselves and to our posterity." Another ran thus:—"Grant that here thy sacraments may be duly administered, thy Gospel truly preached, and thy commandments learnt and loved." A prayer for "the Bishops and Ministers of the Church" and "our most gracious Sovereign the Queen" felicitously referred to her Majesty as "ordained to be a Nursing Mother of thy Church." And further petitions were offered:—"Protect and succour, O Lord, the builders of this House and defend them from all dangers, that the work, which through thy mercy has now been begun, may by their labour be brought to a happy end. But above all things grant that laying aside all malice and all guile, we thy servants may desire the sincere milk of the Word; and coming unto Christ, as unto a living stone, disallowed of men, but chosen of God and precious, we also, as lively stones, may be built up a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to thee, O God, by Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*" After this Psalm C ("All people that on earth do dwell") was sung, and the brief service closed with a collect and the Grace. Speeches were then delivered by the Archdeacon

and Mr Montague Gore, Member of Parliament for Barnstaple, and all returned to the Guildhall in the same order as before, while the church bells rang merry peals.

More than two years had already elapsed since the scheme was taken in hand; and two full years more were to pass before the opening of the church, during which time the work went steadily and uneventfully forward. The tower and spire had not been included in the first estimates—apparently the Committee were doubtful whether the funds would be sufficient; so tenders were asked for later, and that of Messrs Simon Rowe and Richard Gribble was accepted at £420, £30 extra being added afterwards for the expense of obtaining Coombe Down stone for the angles.

Great was the rejoicing on the day that the spire was completed—an event that was announced to the inhabitants below by the workmen on the summit with mighty cheering and much waving of arms. It so happened that the tower of Holy Trinity Church and the spire of St Mary Magdalene's were being built at the same time; for though the former church had been consecrated on June 22nd, 1845, it had not been found possible to erect the whole structure at once. There was consequently a keen rivalry between the two bands of workmen, as to which could finish their work first, and the demonstration on the scaffolding of our church signified victory. It was doubly fitting

then that the bells of the parish church should be rung in order to celebrate this happy consummation, and the Committee, who happened to be holding a meeting that day, adjourned to the churchyard in order to witness the fixing of the weather-cock on the summit. The chairman expressed to the foreman, Mr William Parish, the satisfaction of the Committee at the manner in which he had conducted the work, and in their name presented him with a framed picture of the church; and further the Committee subscribed among themselves and entertained at a complimentary dinner the contractors and their men.

This took place on May 16th, 1846, and before the end of July it was found that the services of the clerk of the works were no longer required, the building operations being now brought to a close, and all except the internal fittings being finished—even the glazing of the windows, which was contracted for by Mr John Tamlin for £29-14-6.

And so the all-important day drew on, when at last the completed church was to be consecrated and taken into use as a place of worship; and Tuesday, November 10th, 1846, was chosen for the sacred ceremony. How thankful must the Vicar have been to see his great parish partitioned, and another church provided, being specially intended to afford accommodation for the poor of the town! And how gratified would be Mr Cotton and Mr Snow and those other faithful committee-men, who

had so generously given their care and time and money, and could now behold the fruit of their labours!

The consecration-day was favoured with beautiful weather, the bells of the mother-church from an early hour pealed forth their cheering music, and strangers from far and near thronged into the town to witness the interesting ceremony. Shortly before eleven o'clock a numerous assemblage gathered at the Guildhall, where a procession was formed, consisting of the children of the Blue Coat Charity Schools with their masters and mistresses; the Mayor in his civic robes, accompanied by the Aldermen, the Common Councilmen, the officials of the municipal body, and the mace-bearers; the members of the Committee; the clergy, marching two by two; and a great number of gentlemen, merchants, tradesmen, and Yeomanry—"a line of very considerable length and imposing appearance." The Lord Bishop, who had spent the previous night as the guest of the Reverend J. J. Scott, Vicar of Holy Trinity, arrived in his carriage, and was received by the clergy and escorted to the south entrance, where he was met by the Reverend H. Luxmoore, who presented the petition for consecration. The church was filled by a congregation of nearly 900 persons, who must have overcrowded the building, although the seats were then packed closer together than is now the case. Morning Prayer was read by Mr Pycroft,

the vicar, the musical portions being ably rendered by the choir of the old church, though it is recorded that, there being no clerk, the responses were but feebly said. The Bishop was the celebrant at the Holy Communion, being assisted by Sub-Dean Stephens and Mr. Luxmoore. The sermon was preached by his Lordship, and was a remarkably out-spoken defence of the Church's position and a scathing indictment of Dissent. He chose as his text Ephesians IV. 4—6, "There is one body, and one Spirit," &c., and his discourse is described as "replete with sound doctrine and scriptural argument;" but we can hardly be surprised that much bitter feeling was engendered by his adopting so militant and aggressive an attitude on an occasion when doubtless many Nonconformist officials had attended to show their goodwill. A reporter says that "he traced the unity of the Church from the apostolic age to the present time, and forcibly impressed on the minds of his hearers the great danger of schismatical separation from the Church, and heretical opinions among its members; and drew a faithful picture of the endless divisions and dissensions which have separated those who have rashly left the Church, and been carried about by divers winds of doctrines." After the Holy Communion the Bishop, standing in the south-west corner of the ground, consecrated the churchyard in due form.*

**Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, November 19th, 1846; *Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, November 14th, 1846.

Another unhappy episode in connection with the consecration service was a dispute that arose concerning the money collected in the church on that occasion. It seems that the vicar, Mr Pycroft, had previously issued a circular, in which he stated that the money collected at the service was to be handed over to the Committee towards the liquidating of the debt (some £161) on the building fund, for which the Committee were personally responsible; and that, trusting this statement, the congregation had contributed liberally, the collection amounting to over £49. Mr Pycroft however failed to pass on this money, and, when asked by the Committee to do so, he quoted the Prayer Book rubric which directs that such moneys are to be disposed of to "pious uses," and averred that he had been warned by the Bishop that that term could not legally be interpreted to mean the payment of a debt. An unpleasant and fruitless correspondence between the two parties was carried on for some months, and ultimately the Committeemen paid up their full shares of the debt—£16-8-6 each. They must have smiled however, as they enjoyed a small revenge—for Mr Pycroft wrote to ask them to pay Mr Joseph Creese's bill of £4-2-6 for forms of service and tickets supplied for the consecration ceremony; whereupon they replied that as the order was given by him without authority from them, it must be paid with the money collected in church and retained by him—

although indeed he was said to have already spent the money in completing the vestry and in heating the church during the winter months.

There now remained nothing more for the Committee to do but to settle the outstanding accounts, and to make their final report to the subscribers. This was done at a meeting held in the Guildhall on April 14th, 1847, and presided over by Mr W. M. Praed, Recorder of Barnstaple; when it was resolved on the motion of Major Wilford, seconded by the Reverend Dr Hayne (Vicar of Pilton), "that the best thanks of the meeting are due to the Committee for their valuable services in carrying on the work to completion in a manner so satisfactory to the subscribers."

The Committee afterwards decided that the list of subscriptions and the balance sheet should be printed, and a copy sent to each subscriber; and in order to preserve permanently the list of our benefactors we close this chapter with their names and contributions.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS AND THEIR DONATIONS.

Rev. J. C. Abraham £1, Sir P. P. Acland, Bart., £85, Sir T. D. Acland, Bart., M.P., £45, T. P. Acland £50, Lady Adams £1, Adelaide, Queen Dowager, £20, Mr Alcock £1, Rev. T. Allen £1-6-0, Mr Arnoll £1, Messrs Arter £5, W. Avery £28-3-0.

John Baker £10, Mr Ballment £10, Rev. E. Balston £1, J. E. Balston £1, Mrs Barbor £5, Mr Barclay £1-1-0, Archdeacon Barnes £12-2-0, R. Barnes £5, Canon Bartholomew £50, Rev. R. Battiscombe £1, Rev. W. Battiscombe £5-2-0, Rev. R. J. Beadon £2-1-0, Mrs Beare £1-1-0, S. Bencraft £5, F. Berry £5, J. Besley £2-2-0, Dr Bignell £10, James Blackmore £3, Capt. Brabazon £6, R. Bremridge £35-10-0, J. Bridgman £1, R. Bridgman £1, Mr Brightwell £10, J. Brightwell £5, T. B. Brooke £3-1-0, A. J. Brown £5, Mrs A. Brown £5, L. W. Buck, M.P., £25, Dr Budd £10, Archdeacon Bull £5, Mr Burden £1, R. Bustin £1.

Charles Carter £25, P. Carter £3-3-0, Rev. W. A. Carter £2, J. R. Chanter £10-10-0, Rev. Jas. H. Chichester £20, R. Chichester £20, Rev. R. H. Chichester £2-2-0, Mrs Chichester (Pill) £10, Miss Chichester £10, Miss A. Chichester £1-11-0, J. S. Clay £20, Lord Clinton £10, Miss Coffin (Bath) £2, Rev. Edw. Coleridge £2, Rev. J. Coles £1, W. Cory £2-2-0, Cotton and Son £25, G. K. Cotton £25, Lord Courtenay £5, Mr Creese £1, Miss Crowfoot £2-5-0, W. Curry £5, Chas. Cutcliffe £25, Misses Cutcliffe £18-3-0.

Capt. C. Davie £5, T. Davy £2-2-0, Misses Dene £6, Z. H. Drake £5, Rev. H. Duprees £3, Rev. E. Durnford £1.

J. Edger £2, R. W. Elliott £6, Rev. J. Evans £1, Bishop of Exeter £50.

Mrs Ferriers £2, J. M. Fisher £5, Earl Fortescue £50, Dowager Countess Fortescue £10-10-0, Miss Froude £10, P. Furze £10.

Mrs Gamble £5, Mr Gibbs £1-1-0, Rev. C. B. Goodford £1, M. Gore, M.P., £77-10-0, Mrs Graeme £2, Mrs Graham £2, J. Greek £1, Miss Greek £10, R. Gregory £20, Gregory and Tucker £5-5-0, J. R. Griffiths £5, Mrs Griffiths (Torquay) £5, Mr Guest £1-1-0, Rev. S. T. Gully £5.

Rev. W. C. Hall £5, Mrs Hamlyn £1-12-6, Rev. J. Harding £11, Rev. J. L. Harding £5, Capt. R. Harding £6, R. Harding £5, T. W. Harding £28-7-0, Miss Harding £5, Miss Bowen Harding £5, Mrs. E. Harris £5, G. Harris and Son £25, M. Harris and Son £3-3-0, Rev. H. H. Hayes £15, Rev. Dr Hayne £2, Miss Heddon £2, Rev. W. C. Hill £10, C. Hoare £10, W. Hodge £20, F. Hodgson, M.P., £77-10-0, J. A. Holder £5, Capt. C. Hole £20, Rev. F. Hole £5, Rev. G. Hole £10, J. Horden £3, Rev. N. A. Howard £5, C. Huxtable £10.

Rev. P. Johnson £10, Rev. G. Johnston £15, Mr Jones £2-1-0.

Rev. W. Karslake £2, Mrs King £1, Mrs T. King £3, T. Kirkwood £5.

Mrs Latimer £1, Rev. J. Law £10, J. Law £25, T. H. Law £25, T. S. Law £25, W. Law £28-3-0, Mrs Law (Cott) £25, Misses Law £7, N. V. Lee £5-5-0, C. T. Le Gallais £20, Mrs Linnington £2, Miss Linnington £2, Rev. A. F. Lloyd £5, J. T.

Lock £1-1-0, Sir R. Lopez, Bart., M.P., £10, A. Loveband £5, Rev. C. Luxmoore £20, Rev. H. Luxmoore £45, J. Luxmoore £1, Misses Luxmoore £2.

J. Mackrell £10, T. Mackrell £10, Misses Mackrell £5-5-0, J. Mallett £20, J. Marsh (Lion) £3-3-0, J. Marshall £35-10-0, Rev. S. Marshall £1, Miss Marshall £6, Rev. Chancellor Martin £5, Rev. J. Maunder £1, Capt. May £10-10-0, Rev. J. C. Middleton £1, Rev. K. A. Money £2-10-0, Mrs Money £2-10-0, Jas. Moon £5, Mrs Morrison £15, Miss Morrison £5.

Mrs. Nicholletts £1, Capt. Nihill £5, Mrs J. W. Noble £1.

C. E. Palmer £10, W. Parker £25, Mr Parkin £4-4-0, J. E. Parr £1-1-0, G. Peard £6-6-0, O. V. Pengelly £5, Rev. H. S. Pinder £10, W. M. Praed £5-5-0, Mrs Praed £6, Mrs Pycroft £1, Rev. J. Pyke £10, J. Pyke £25.

Rice and Son £5-5-0, W. V. Richards £5, C. Roberts £50, E. R. Roberts £25, Rev. J. R. Roberts £50, Miss Roberts £20.

Miss Saltern £5, Rev. F. A. Savile £1-1-0, Mrs Savile £5, Searle and Son £1-1-0, J. A. Secker £1, Miss Servante £1-10-0, Mr Sharman £1, Miss Shephard £15, James Shuttleworth £5, M. Snell £1-1-0, W. Snow £35, J. S. Souch £3, Mrs and Misses Spurway £10, H. Squire £1, Miss Squire £6, Rev. R. Stevens £10, G. C. Symons £1.

J. Tamlyn £5, Mrs Tetherly £2-2-0, J. Thorne £5, Capt. Toller £5-5-0, J. H. Toller £5, T. B. Torr £3.

Messrs Vellacott £2-2-0.

Miss Ward £3, J. Weeks £1, Sir T. Wheler, Bart., £2-2-0, Capt. White £5, R. White £1, Rev. Jas. Whyte £5, Jas. Whyte £10, Rev. J. Wilder £1, Major Wilford £6-1-0, Capt. Williams £30, Mr Willis £1-1-0, Woolmer and Son £2-10-0, Sir B. P. Wrey, Bart., £10, Rev. H. B. Wrey £25.

Yeo and Shapland £5, W. Young £10.

CHAPTER VI.

The vicariate of the Reverend James Pycroft.

The first vicar chosen to take charge of the parish of St Mary Magdalene's, Barnstaple, was the Reverend James Pycroft. The second son of Mr Thomas Pycroft of Pickwick, Wiltshire, barrister-at-law, and the younger brother of Sir Thomas Pycroft, an able and successful Madras civil servant, he was born at Geyers House, Wiltshire, in 1813, and at the age of eighteen entered Trinity College, Oxford, where he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1836. At the university he gained himself a name by his devotion to cricket—a reputation that lasted throughout his life; for he was not only well known as a left-handed bowler, but while still an undergraduate he published a book on the subject, entitled *Principles of Scientific Batting*; and indeed he claimed to be, jointly with J. C. Ryle (afterwards Bishop of Liverpool), co-founder of the annual Oxford and Cambridge cricket match.

Leaving Oxford he became a student of Lincoln's Inn, but four years later abandoned the Law and took Holy Orders (deacon's in 1840, and priest's in 1841), and sought scholastic work as second master of Leicester Collegiate School — doubtless being assisted in gaining the post by the reputation of his recent book, *Guide to University Honours*, which had already reached a second edition. Five years later he again changed his career, becoming Assistant Curate of Chardstock in Dorset, a parish with a population of about a thousand. Here, however, he stayed but a very short while, being promoted to Barnstaple in the same year. The reason for his being selected for the post does not appear, but though he was only thirty-two years of age, and had no special bent for theology or ecclesiastical affairs, and was almost without experience of parochial work, he was a scholar and a man of considerable and varied abilities, and was withal well connected socially, and was possessed of good private means. That a gentleman, such as he was, should accept so unattractive an appointment is strange indeed, for the parish was populous and poor, the emoluments were utterly inadequate, and the work, which had to be started *ab initio*, demanded energy, self-devotion, and great power of initiative. We can only suppose that Mr Pycroft was hoping for leisure to indulge his literary tastes, and for a life of ease in his comfortable country house, with

perhaps opportunity for the pleasures of cricket and society.

How far he was successful in satisfying at once the claims of both duty and inclination we at this distance in time are not in a position to judge; but a partial solution of the problem may be sought in the pages of his lecture on *Literature compatible with a busy life*, which was addressed to the Barnstaple Early Closing Association, and published in 1852. Anyhow his pen was not idle, for that period of his life was marked by the production of a number of works. In the year that he was nominated to St Mary Magdalene's he published no less than three books—*Greek Grammar Practice*, *Latin Grammar Practice*, and *A Course of English Reading*; and during his incumbency he brought out also *The Collegian's Guide, or Recollections of College Days* (1845), *Four Lectures on the advantages of a Classical Education as an auxiliary to a Commercial Education* (1847), and *The Cricket Field, or the History and the Science of Cricket* (1851), which reached a ninth edition in 1887. Besides these he edited Valpy's *Virgil improved* in 1846, and W. Enfield's *The Speaker* in 1851. Truly his eleven years' vicariate was—from the literary point of view — prolific, and we may well believe that he enjoyed a wide-spread fame in both the educational and still more in the sporting world.

It is somewhat remarkable that his appointment was made before his church had been even

founded, though the parish had indeed just been constituted—for he was nominated by Her Majesty Queen Victoria on September 30th, 1844, his licensing following on March 10th, 1845, whereas the foundation-stone of the church was not laid until November of the latter year. Mr Pycroft's duties therefore were necessarily of a somewhat ill-defined and unsatisfactory nature, being mostly limited to visiting his prospective congregation in their homes and assisting the Vicar of Barnstaple in his church services, until such time as he had a church of his own.

In his time the parish was but poorly equipped, having no school, no vicarage, no church-hall or parish-rooms, but only a church, and an endowment of £150, together with fees for occasional duties. The vicar was consequently free to choose his own place of residence, and at first he resided at Mount Sandford—an unfortunate selection from the point of view of his people, for that pleasant mansion was in the parish of Bishops Tawton, and distant two miles from his own parish; though afterwards he moved somewhat nearer, occupying No. 1 Trafalgar Lawn in the parish of Newport, which was provided with stable and coach-house, and whence he could conveniently drive to his church for his Sunday services. But Mr Pycroft—whose vicariate, be it remembered, ended sixty years ago—hardly rose to the modern ideal of a parish priest; for he was not often to be

seen in his parish, and disliked visiting the poor or the sick, having a wholesome dread of dirt and disease. Furthermore the services in his church (which was plain and dull in appearance) were limited to two on Sunday, and perhaps one on Wednesday, the Holy Communion being celebrated only once a month; and no schooling was provided for the children either on Sunday or on week-days. At that time there was a mixed choir, and the singing was accomanied by a seraphim—an old-fashioned instrument that preceded harmoniums. It is also recorded that the Vicar, who was by no means eloquent, always read his sermons from manuscript, and was regarded as "very dry." On the whole therefore it is not surprising that the congregations were sparse at that period.

The parishioners however ought ever to be grateful to him for a signal act of generosity, for from his own resources he paid the cost of the erection of the graceful tower and spire of their church, his contribution amounting to £420; and, be it noticed, the original contract did not include that part of the plan, for the Committee were not in a position to find the necessary funds, so that, but for his liberality, the church might to this present day have lacked its most prominent and beautiful feature. Nor must it be forgotten that he exerted himself to rouse the public conscience to care for the well-being of the poor, his plain speaking on

the subject of drains and infection causing considerable interest and controversy in 1853, when he published two pamphlets, one addressed *To the Rate-payers of Barnstaple on the Public Health Act*, and the other entitled *The Public Health Act conducive to Health, Wealth, and Godliness.*

In person Mr Pycroft was tall and upright, spare in figure, vigorous, somewhat soldierly in carriage, and very neat in his dress, and he gave people the impression of being very much of a gentleman—more so than a clergyman.

There is not much to record of his doings while vicar here. It is worthy of note, however, that he was elected by his brethren as their Rural Dean in 1852, 1853, and 1854; that he is said to have been the first clergyman in Barnstaple to wear a surplice in the pulpit instead of the customary black gown, lavender-coloured gloves being also his vogue; and that in 1855 he obtained from the Bishop twelve months' leave of absence, the Reverend George Johnston, B.D., Head Master of the Grammar School, being placed in charge of the parish. He left his cure in October of that year, but long before the time for his return he resigned the benefice, and his parishioners knew him no more.

On retiring from Barnstaple he bade farewell to clerical life, and settled at Bathwick near Bath, where he devoted himself partly to literary pursuits and partly to cricket as a member of the Lansdowne

Cricket Club; and though he seems never to have attained to any marked proficiency as a player, he was regarded as a first-rate authority on the history and rules and science of the game.

His published works, written after his Barnstaple days, include *Ways and Words of Men of Letters* (1861), *The Cricket Tutor* (1862), *Cricketana* (1865), and *Oxford Memories, a retrospect after fifty years* (1886). He also blossomed out as a novelist, his first and most famous contribution to fiction being *Twenty Years in the Church*, issued 1859, which ran through four editions. This was followed in the next year by *Elkerton Rectory*, and in the year after by *Agony Point, or the Groans of Gentility*; and so great was his success in this line that he was encouraged to bring out even another, *Dragon's Teeth*, in 1863. The first two novels mentioned above professed to be auto-biographical; and though they are much more imaginary than historical, many Church events and phases of life in Barnstaple may be recognised therein, and also some inhabitants of the town, and even parishioners of his own, described with biting satire and unkindly cynicism. Therein too is displayed his own strong theological or ecclesiastical bias, which consisted chiefly in a deeply rooted antipathy against Tractarianism. This led him to indulge in cheap gibes and scoffing ridicule against the tenets and practices of devout adherents of the Church Revival movement—a controversial method

that was common enough in those days, but which appears to us now to be uncharitable and irreverent, or even worse.

Later on Mr Pycroft removed from Bathwick Hill and took up his residence in the west end of London near Hyde Park, occupying for many years a house in Gloucester Gardens. He died at Dudley Mansion, Lansdowne Place, Brighton, where he was then residing, on March 10th, 1895, falling a victim to an attack of influenza at the age of eighty-two years. In 1843 he had married Ann, widow of Mr F. P. Alleyn, but he left no issue.

Mr Pycroft's fame still survives in the cricket world, and will continue to survive for many a long year to come; for even now in *Wisden's Cricketers' Almanack* his *Principles of Scientific Batting* heads the list of publications concerning England's national game, and his three other works on the same subject also find a place there. Nor can we in Barnstaple ever allow his name to sink into oblivion, so long as the beautiful Pycroft spire adorns our town, and, pointing heavenwards, reminds the parishioners of St Mary Magdalene's of the rich benefaction of their first vicar; though in truth we are bound to admit that both in his own heart's affection and in the estimate of the world, before and above the title of vicar must be placed his *rôle* as cricketer.

CHAPTER VII.

The vicariate of the Reverend Henry John Bull.

A big and tall man — though a stoop somewhat detracted from his height—with a bushy black beard, and a person carelessly habited ; one who would do what he pleased or thought right, irrespective of the opinions of others ; an ardent politician, and a keen antagonist against Dissenters—though always ready to help them in time of need ; a mathematician with a love for theology, and devoted to such hobbies as fishing, carpentering, and gardening, and an inveterate smoker ;—such a man was our second vicar. And these varied traits bespeak a person of interest and character—a man *sui generis*, who was sure to attract attention, and was calculated to exercise influence in his own sphere of life.

A parson of parsons was the Reverend Henry John Bull, for his father was Vicar of Littlebury in Essex, and both his grand-fathers and two of his great-grand-fathers were clergymen, beneficed in Essex or Suffolk, one of the latter (Dr. Sharp)

being so distinguished as to be appointed Archbishop of York, and a direct though more remote ancestor was Dean Boys of Canterbury in the sixteenth century. Born in his father's vicarage on August 29th, 1819, he was educated at home by his parents, never going to any school; and, his mother being an able mathematician, he succeeded in winning a scholarship at St John's College, Cambridge, at the age of eighteen, and gained the high honour of graduating as ninth wrangler in the mathematical tripos of 1841, though handicapped by six months' illness in consequence of an attack of small-pox. Three years later he was ordained by Bishop Blomfield of London in the Chapel Royal, St James's; and after holding curacies at St James the Great, Bethnal Green, and at Ledbury in Herefordshire, he became Curate-in-charge of Axminster, Devon, the vicar being an absentee. This led to his being appointed in 1856 by Bishop Phillpotts to St Mary Magdalene's, Barnstaple, the patron declaring that he chose him because he wanted some one to convert that heathen parish, and because Mr Bull, being known to be a good fighter, might be expected to make an impression on the political dissent of the place. The Reverend George Johnston indeed, whose very neat hand-writing is quite a feature of our register-books, had given so much satisfaction as Curate-in-charge, that the parishioners had moved the Bishop to make him their vicar; but they were

not sufficiently prompt in their action, for before their petition reached him, his Lordship had already made the appointment.

At Barnstaple Mr Bull's practical ability and scholarly attainments made him useful in various public capacities—for many years he held the post of President of the Clerical Society, he was Chairman of the Bridge Trust, he acted as Treasurer of the Barnstaple Blue Coat School, as a Trustee he took an active interest in the Cordwainers' Charity, he was one of the originators of the Flower Show and a zealous supporter of the North Devon Literary Institution, for many years he was Vice-chairman of the Poor Guardians, and was never absent from their weekly meetings at the Workhouse, he was one of the prime movers in establishing the Soup Kitchen, he worked as a voluntary Diocesan Inspector of Schools, and he was often asked to preach the sermon at Ordinations and gatherings of clergy. Furthermore as an ardent Tory he was appointed Chairman of the Conservative Committee, and exulted at the triumphant return of Sir Robert Carden, boasting that the victory had been won without bribery; but, alas! his faithful henchman confessed that he had bought eighty votes at twenty shillings each, and Mr Bull in chagrin resigned his office, and henceforth evinced less interest in party politics.

But throughout his twenty-seven years' vicariate he devoted himself most heartily to the work

in his own parish, being a good visitor, and kind to the sick, and diligent in gathering in the contributions to the Clothing Club and the Coal Club. He worked his parish single-handed, without either Assistant Curate or any band of Church-workers; and though the services in the church seem few to us—being almost confined to Sundays—he would not be condemned by the standard of that time. As a preacher he could not be described as effective—at least in his own parish; for though his matter was good, his sermons were always read from manuscript, and his style of delivery was unattractive: in short, he was more suited to an educated congregation than to the poor and ignorant.

In his time the services in church were always read; the choir, in which the female element predominated, sat by the organ in the south-east chapel—the north-east chapel being unoccupied, except sometimes by the school-children; the Holy Communion was administered only once a month—after Morning Prayer on the first Sunday (though latterly he had an early Celebration on the other Sundays and on Holy Days); the afternoon service was converted into a children's service, and an evening service was started by him--Mr John May Miller of the lace-factory being responsible for the provision of gas-brackets; the altar was entirely bare and unadorned, save for a crimson silk covering—no cross, or candle-sticks, or frontal. As a churchman Mr Bull might be described as an old-

fashioned Anglican—one who accepted the doctrines of the *Book of Common Prayer*, though in other respects uninfluenced by the Church Revival movement of the previous generation; but though he would avow to the malcontents of the mother-church of Barnstaple that he agreed with their vicar, Mr Seymour, in his views on the Sacraments, he always celebrated at the north end of his altar, and St Mary Magdalene's was universally regarded as the "low" church of Barnstaple.

The salient feature of Mr Bull's vicariate was his educational work, and in this respect no one could ever surpass his devotion and industry. He started a Night School for the youth of his poor parish, and conducted it himself; and it is beautiful to think of this ripe mathematical scholar giving up two hours on four evenings a week to the imparting of the first rudiments of learning to the ignorant of the Derby district. His talents however found scope in other quarters, and a peer and a professor are numbered among his old private pupils.

The Sunday School of the parish was inaugurated by him, being held at first in the church, as there was then no other building available, though afterwards it was transferred to the new Day School. Mr Bull himself was superintendent and teacher, and it is still remembered how, arrayed in his black gown, he used to escort his young flock to church on Sundays.

But the branch of educational work that was dearest to his heart was his Day School—and *his* Day School it was, for he was its originator and founder, and during all his time its chief supporter and manager. Though his fortune was but small, his annual subscription was £25, which was often considerably increased; and it is believed that from first to last he spent fully a thousand pounds on the building and the maintenance of the schools.

And equally generous was he with his time and his personal service. As a rule he was there in school every morning to start the day's duties with prayer, and he generally made himself responsible for the religious instruction of the first class; and when the master was short-handed—as was frequently the case—he would help with the other subjects too, attending in the afternoon as well as the morning. As a disciplinarian indeed he was not very successful—the log-book contains some quaint remarks concerning his encouragement of disorder in his class-room by standing the boys on their heads and by bringing his dog to school; and his attempts to teach the children singing by the aid of his flute (he being quite unmusical) gave rise to practical joking. But there can be no doubt that his prime ambition and his most untiring efforts were devoted to the influencing of the young in his parish by education; and quite characteristic of the man are the fact that he made many of the school benches with his own hands, and the record in that

same log-book that on his return from his annual holiday in Jersey the Vicar went down at once to visit his beloved school. And yet what a failure the school was! In the chapter on "The Day Schools" are described the terribly adverse circumstances under which the work was carried on, and the greviously disappointing reports that were received annually from Her Majesty's Inspector. But all through that long period of more than twenty years Mr Bull was toiling on, patient, unflagging, undaunted; giving of his best for the enlightening and the uplifting of the poor of his flock, and waiting and hoping for brighter days. And—it gives us joy to record it—he lived to see those better days. For before he left, the school had begun to steadily improve; and it must have been the truest and deepest satisfaction of his whole ministerial career, that he was able to watch the growing success, and afterwards to hear good reports of the progress of the most cherished of his schemes.

Mr Bull was twice married, his first wife being Miss Sarah Decima Walters of Norwich, a valued and influential friend of the poor, whose body rests close outside the church porch (she died March 25th, 1870), and whose funeral was an eloquent testimony of the love that the poor cherished for her, her grave being nearly filled with bunches of flowers, dropped in by the school-children. He afterwards, in 1875, married Miss Amy Louisa Starke, who

bore him seven children, and who survives him. There being no vicarage house, he at first for a few years lived at 6 Grosvenor Terrace, and then he bought 1 Ebberly Place (now Ebberly Lawn), which he made his home for the rest of his time.

When he had attained the age of sixty-three, he found his strength beginning to fail, and Bishop Temple transferred him to Roborough, a small country parish, distant from Barnstaple some fourteen miles, where he died on February 28th, 1889, in his seventieth year, after holding the benefice for six years.

It may be added that in token of appreciation of his public services Barnstaple presented him with a parting gift of £151, the object being to relieve Mr Bull of a debt on the school, for which he was personally responsible; and that after his death a "Bull Fund" was raised by the contributions of many friends far and near, the substantial sum of £240 being handed over to Mrs Bull in memory of her husband, who at St Mary Magdalene's will ever be remembered as the children's friend and the educationalist.

CHAPTER VIII.

The vicariate of the Reverend John Cunningham Geikie.

On the retirement of Mr Bull, who became rector of Roborough on January 15th, 1883, there ensued an interval of four or five months before the arrival of the new vicar—an interval that was happily filled by the Reverend A. E. Seymour, who brought with him his own congregation from the old church, which was just then undergoing restoration, and was therefore not available for public worship. Early in June, however, the new vicar came to take charge of his parish, being appointed by Her Majesty the Queen—for he was a man of some note.

Descended from a Scotch family, and born at Edinburgh on October 26th, 1824, John Cunningham Geikie was a son of the Reverend Archibald Geikie, a Presbyterian minister, whose services were chiefly devoted to the cause of Christianity in Canada. For many years the son followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a Presbyterian minister in 1848, and spending six years in Canada,

first as a missionary and afterwards taking work at Halifax in Nova Scotia. He then came to England, and received appointments at Sunderland and at Islington; and after ministering for twenty-eight years as a Presbyterian, and being now fifty-two years of age, he was ordained by the Bishop of Winchester as a clergyman in the Church of England. A few years were spent as curate of St Peter's, Dulwich, and as rector of Christchurch, Neuilly, near Paris, and then he came to Barnstaple as the third vicar of St Mary Magdalene's. He had already in his Presbyterian days been admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity at Queen's College, Kingston, Ontario, and had made himself a name as a writer on Biblical and other kindred subjects—his *Life and Words of Christ* in two volumes had rapidly attained to a wide popularity, his *Hours with the Bible* in twelve volumes was in course of production, and he had also published *The English Reformation*, a simple history written on ultra-protestant lines. Furthermore he brought with him the reputation of being an eloquent preacher.

As might reasonably be anticipated, a vicar of such fame attracted to his church a considerable congregation—drawn from all parts of Barnstaple and its environs, and consisting rather of the well-to-do than of the poorer classes. The services indeed were few and of the plainest character—on Sunday only two, and in the week one on Wednesday

evening, with Holy Communion after Morning Prayer on the first Sunday and after Evening Prayer on the third Sunday in the month; and though the Psalms were chanted, the mixed choir did not attempt to sing the responses. But as a preacher Dr Geikie excelled, his sermons being replete with scriptural learning, ably expressed, and always delivered without manuscript. Some persons indeed were offended by the oft-repeated insistance of the moral obligation of tee-totalism—the most moderate partaking of any alcoholic beverage being unsparingly condemned as sinful—so that the congregation lost several members who were useful or influential; while others were driven away by an untactful and too comprehensive denunciation of tricks of trade; but for his first year he succeeded in holding a large congregation.

As an organizer of various branches of work he was both zealous and able, and many bands of workers were called together, and societies or classes inaugurated, with the result that his brief vicariate was a time of unexampled and really remarkable activity. Most prominent among these new enterprises were a Temperance Society and a Band of Hope, a Mothers' Meeting and a Girls' Friendly Society, a Bible Class and a second Sunday School (held in a schoolroom at the top of Aze's Lane under the superintendence of Mr John Warren), and meetings of Lady Visitors and of Sunday School Teachers. Besides all these he established

a branch of the Church Missionary Society, the whole of Barnstaple being mapped out into districts for his collectors; and he started a Children's Service, to be held monthly in the church, and also conducted a Children's Flower Service—an attractive novelty in those days. Furthermore he arranged a Mission Week, local clergymen being invited to preach, each on one evening; and in order to make an endeavour to reach the indifferent he held some out-of-door services, which were succeeded by mission services in the school-room, these again in turn being soon dropped in favour of cottage services. Other enterprises of a different sort were the publication of a monthly Parish Magazine and the issue of a Parish Almanack. Mention too must be made of some important improvements in the church:—a new organ was obtained and placed in the north-east chapel, the singers being seated in the choir; and the floors at the west-end of the church, as well as that under the organ, were renewed, and the whole edifice underwent a thorough cleaning.

Truly the new vicar was a marvel as an originator of fresh organizations; and if it has to be admitted that he attempted little or no parochial visiting, and did not teach in his day schools, and was over-careful with his money—what a contrast from Mr Bull he was in every respect!—the fact remains that his success, while it lasted, was signal. Probably never in the whole history of our church

have the congregations been so large and the active Church-workers so numerous, and certainly the collections have never been so generous.

Two other schemes he mooted, but failed to carry through, owing to the opposition of his parishioners, one of them being a more important scheme than any of those that he successfully accomplished. In order to ensure an increase of the church's funds he wished to introduce a system of pew-rents, such as is in vogue in several places of worship in Barnstaple; but at a meeting held to discuss his motion it was pointed out that certain Church Societies had originally made grants to the building fund on condition that all the sittings should be free, and consequently this proposal was rejected. The other and greater plan was the building of a Mission Hall, to be erected in the south-east corner of the churchyard; and so confident was he that all would be well, that he set his supporters to work preparing for a great bazaar, which was to secure the necessary funds. But the suggested site was not acceptable to the people, the churchyard being then still in use as a cemetery; and so strong was the opposition, that notwithstanding all his efforts and his arguments his scheme was vetoed at a large meeting of parishioners, many of whom were not church-goers.

This defeat was a cruel blow, and his chagrin consequent on this failure, together with his sorrow

at the death of a favourite daughter—"My Jeanie," whose grave is near the church door—inclined him to plan a visit to the Holy Land, and thus gather material for his literary undertakings. He had hitherto worked without the services of an assistant curate, though he had the help of Mr Henry Heape as lay-reader; so he now arranged that the Reverend Alexander Griffith should be Curate-in-charge of the parish, and having obtained from the Bishop licence of non-residence from January 31st, 1885, he set out on his travels. During his absence his congregation were altogether taken by surprise by seeing in the newspapers an announcement that he had effected an exchange of livings with the Reverend A. W. L. Rivett, Vicar of St Martin-at-Palace, Norwich, and his parish saw him no more save to take his farewell in the following May.

Thus ended a meteor-like vicariate—brilliant, but of short duration. The time that Dr Geikie was actually in his parish lasted little more than a year and a half; but it was notable for his preaching power, for the multiplicity of his organizations, and for his literary labours. The last respect indeed was the principal one, and to that he was able to devote almost all his time and attention. For his family made no great demands on him—his wife (a Miss Margaret Taylor of Dublin) lived very quietly, his son was grown up, one daughter was married, and the other, who was conversant with continental languages as well as being an

attractive and accomplished woman, helped him much with his books. And although his parish was both populous and poor, the services were few, his readiness as a preacher enabled him to produce eloquent sermons with little or no preparation, and he could leave most of his parish work to his lay-reader and large staff of voluntary helpers; while he, immured in his smoky study at No. 1 Ebberly Lawn — for he was devoted to his pipe—penned volume after volume of Biblical commentaries, which interested and delighted the religious world, and which drew from an Archbishop of Canterbury the high encomium that "Dr Geikie's writings have laid the Church under the deepest obligation to him."

When we come to enquire about Dr Geikie's theological views, we must bear in mind his Presbyterian up-bringing, and his long adherence to that profession. Indeed it is doubtful whether he ever really abjured his former opinions, and in his heart accepted the Church's teaching. True, he was ordained a priest, he prepared candidates for Confirmation, and he welcomed his bishop's visit to his church for the ministration of that rite. But his introduction of evening Communion, his steadfast opposition to all that savoured of High Church doctrine or practice, his neglect of sacramental teaching, the fewness of his Confirmation candidates, and his use of Moody and Sankey's hymn-book at his Wednesday services in church, all

indicate that his churchmanship—if such it could be called—was of a very indefinite type, or even of Nonconformist tendency.

In person Dr Geikie was a man of rather large frame, inclined to be stout, and a little under average height, though of upright carriage. The most noticeable feature of his appearance was his remarkable fairness of complexion. In conversation he was genial and lively; and if not actually witty, he appreciated humour, and his utterances acquired piquancy from slight but frequent indication of his connexion with North Britain.

We have only to add that after spending five years at Norwich as Vicar of St Martin-at-Palace he retired in poor health to Bournemouth. Soon after his retirement Edinburgh University conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws as a recognition of his merits as an author, his publications including, in addition to those mentioned above, *The Holy Land and the Bible*, *Old Testament Characters*, *The Precious Promises*, *A short Life of Christ*, *The Vicar and his Friends*, and *Entering on Life, a Book for Young Men*. He died at Bournemouth on April 1st, 1906, and his body was brought to Barnstaple to be laid to rest with the remains of his daughter near the entrance of the church that he had filled by his eloquence, his enterprise, and his reputation as a Biblical commentator.

CHAPTER IX.

The vicariate of the Reverend Alfred William Lovely Rivett.

Our fourth vicar, who was the youngest son of Mr Richard Rivett, was born at Great Yarmouth on April 24th, 1835, and received his education at several boarding schools in Norfolk. His parents were Nonconformists, but the boy was attracted by the Church of England, and at the age of fifteen (his parents offering no objection) he became a Sunday School teacher under the Reverend George Hills, Vicar of Great Yarmouth (afterwards Bishop of Columbia), and took up other branches of Church work, being especially interested in foreign missions. A proposal that he should seek his livelihood as a chemist was rejected by him, for he aspired to Holy Orders; and though a College course was not open to him, his relations enabled him to respond to an appeal of Bishop Colenso for workers in his diocese of Natal, and at the age of nineteen he set sail for Africa with that prelate and a band of missionaries. In 1858 he was ordained deacon at Maritzburg by Bishop Colenso, his admission to priest's orders

following four years later. Mr Rivett spent about ten years in Natal, during most of which time his work was at Durban, a period that is noteworthy in the history of the Church as comprising the condemnation and deposition of Bishop Colenso for heresy. It is right to add, however, that though Mr Rivett ever entertained affection and reverence for his bishop, he did not endorse his doctrinal opinions. During his stay he married Miss Anna Mary Sanderson, whose father was a Liverpool merchant, and who was a member of the missionary band with whom he had sailed to Africa. She bore him a daughter, his only child, but she died in her youth, before his Barnstaple days.

On his return to England he spent a year in deputation work for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and then made his way to his old home, serving for a few years as Assistant Curate of Great Yarmouth, whose church claims to be the largest in England. He then held a curacy-in-charge at Bunwell near Attleborough in Norfolk; after which he became Vicar of New Buckenham in the same neighbourhood; whence he removed to the city of Norwich as Vicar of St Martin-at-Palace. There he remained happily for fourteen years, until in 1885 he exchanged benefices with Dr Geikie and took up his residence in Barnstaple.

Here his experiences were a sad contrast to those at Norwich, his unhappiness being due to monetary considerations. The poverty of the

benefice—the income was only £160 and there was no vicarage house—had been somewhat relieved in his predecessor's time, for the churchwardens were able to allow him £100 from the church funds. But not only was it found impossible to continue this reasonable augmentation of the stipend, but an assurance, made to Mr Rivett during the negociations concerning the exchange, that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were about to add £100 to their annual grant, was discovered, as soon as he was licensed to the living, to be devoid of foundation. The new vicar therefore began his career at St Mary Magdalene's with a grievance rankling in his mind, and feeling that the conditions of the exchange had not been truly represented to him; so that he was ready to protest ever after, that, if he had known the facts a day or two sooner, he would have refused to take the final step.

At first the churchwardens arranged that the surplus funds, after the paying of church expenses, should be handed over to the vicar as an addition to his stipend; but, as that was found to be unsatisfactory, the plan was adopted of allotting to him the collections on one Sunday in each month. These, however, proved to be small, and as they steadily diminished, the Vicar preached and wrote very strongly on the subject, unsparingly denouncing the meanness of his congregation, and occupying the whole of a lengthy printed "Pastoral Letter" with a scathing indictment of his people

for failure of duty in this respect; but as a consequence the sums dwindled still more, until at last he declared that he would not receive such paltry contributions, even the Easter offerings being treated as the others.

Mr Rivett had occasion too to complain bitterly of the want of loyalty on the part of many of his Church-workers; and so pointed were his public utterances in this connection, as well as those concerning finance, that not only did many persons withhold their contributions, but the congregation grew thinner and thinner. Indeed this period was one of almost constant warfare—his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him—so that poor Mr Rivett has ever since maintained that his coming to Barnstaple was "the mistake of my life."

And yet there were not wanting signs of vitality and even of vigour in the working of the parish. The Vicar was—in common parlance—"a powerful preacher," rugged and unpolished in style, but one who spoke out his mind unflinchingly and without respect of persons; and withal one who delivered his sermons, which were always written, both fluently and weightily. He had too the services of an assistant curate, a grant of £90 a year from the Additional Curates Societies enabling him to offer a stipend of £120, so that he secured a succession of four colleagues—the Reverend Messrs A. Bowman, E. R. Fisher, W. A. Badger, and E. M.

Hadow. Latterly indeed he was obliged to forego this help, owing to the want of local support of the Curate Fund; but even then he enjoyed for a while the voluntary assistance of the Reverend H. D. S. Sweetapple, a resident in Barnstaple, who was signally successful with a men's Bible class. Great energy was displayed in bringing children to Baptism, as many as 127 being registered in one year. The choir were (in 1885) for the first time habited in surplices—which was done economically for £12, cassocks not being worn as yet. The Vicar's interest in foreign missions was evidenced in the practical way of instituting annual sermons on behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in addition to the already existing Church Missionary Society Sunday. Furthermore the standard of churchmanship was somewhat raised —the Holy Communion was administered every Sunday (twice a month at mid-day, and early on the other Sundays), the evening Communion being dropped; courses of sermons were preached in Advent and Holy Week; and Saints' Days were marked by an evening service with sermon, the similar observance of Wednesdays being continued as before.

Of other aspects of his time at Barnstaple it only remains to add that at first he resided in Rock Park, calling his house "Natal Villa"; whence he removed to "Fort Hill Villa" (now "Abertawe"); after which he rented "Addington," which in his

successor's time was purchased for the benefice and became the vicarage house. During his stay he published as an octavo volume, illustrated by a portrait of himself, his reminiscences of his sojourn in South Africa, entitled *Ten Years' Church work in Natal*, which has had a good sale. His chief doings outside his own parish were preaching in various churches for foreign missions and serving as a member of the Barnstaple School Board.

At last, after a twelve years' vicariate, there came an opportunity for Mr Rivett to return to the diocese in which as Vicar of St Martin-at-Palace, Norwich, he had successfully accomplished so much, for he was offered by a private patron the little country benefice of Clippesby, only a few miles from his birthplace, Great Yarmouth. Its pretty church, its excellent house, and its good grounds were attractive, and thither he was fain to retire to spend more easily and more peacefully his declining years.

On Sunday evening, February 7th, 1897, in the presence of a crowded congregation he took his farewell of his flock, preaching on the subject of "ministerial responsibility," which had been also the subject of his first sermon, and selecting as his text, "We speak, not as pleasing man, but God." The burden of his discourse was the sad admission, "we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing." "Plenty of missionary work," he said, "could be found for two energetic, hard-working

curates, a Scripture reader, and a Bible woman in the largest and poorest of the three parishes in Barnstaple. If these workers could be produced, where are the funds to come from for their sustenance? And were they all vigorously at work, it is to be feared it would take years before any real fruit could be seen. What traces have I had the pleasure of witnessing of the good work in which my three predecessors were engaged for years? What are now the visible fruits to be seen at St Mary's of the work of four curates during eight years of the nearly twelve years of my vicariate? We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing. I have had thirty-nine years' ministerial experience, but never was it my lot in any former sphere to observe the coldness and indifference to all spiritual things which I have had to contend against in this large, poor parish of 4400 souls. Whoever succeeds me, if he cannot supply what is wanting to organize and obtain additional faithful and loyal helpers in his work, if he be a conscientious man, it will almost break his heart."

Notwithstanding all the troubles of his vicariate his old parishioners bear him in kindly remembrance. He is so delightfully keen about his grievances and his controversies—for he dearly loved the fray, so happily proud of having preached 1400 sermons in our church, so ready to enjoy the good things of this world, so appreciative of any attentions shown to him, and so frank in admitting

his own failures and so charitable in recognising the successes of others, that they welcome his revisits, and flock to the church to hear him preach once more, undeterred by the recollection that as their vicar he was a fighter and a dun.

CHAPTER X.

The vicariate of the Reverend Edward John Windsor.

Edward John Windsor was born in 1841 at Kingston in Canada, where his father, Major James Windsor, was stationed at the time. After an education at Woolwich, Merchant Taylors' School, and the Liverpool Collegiate Institution, he entered the head office of the London Joint Stock Bank, where he remained for some years. During this time he married Juliet Ada, daughter of Mr John Beale of Waltham Cross, who bore him a family of seven sons and one daughter. The strain of the work in a large London bank, however, proved too heavy for him, and a break-down in health obliged him to seek other occupation, which he found by acquiring a business at Liskeard in Cornwall. There he undertook various branches of Church work, superintending the Sunday School, and managing a mission in a neighbouring village, his success encouraging him to offer himself as a candidate for the ministry, for which he took the course of preparation at St Bees Theological College in Cumberland.

In 1886 he was admitted to Holy Orders in Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Bickersteth, who also ordained him priest in the following year, and for four years he served as Assistant Curate of Wolborough with Newton Abbot. He was then appointed by the same prelate to be Vicar of Horrabridge, where he had the happiness of superintending the building of the present church and presiding at its consecration. After that he travelled abroad, spending some while in New Zealand and visiting Australia and India—an experience which insured his ever after being an ardent supporter of foreign missions. On his return to England he was chosen to succeed Mr Rivett as Vicar of St Mary Magdalene's, Barnstaple, on the nomination of Her Majesty Queen Victoria — the last appointment made here by the Crown, for the patronage having till then been exercised alternately by the Sovereign and the Bishop, as was also the case with Sempringham in Lincolnshire, it was enacted by an Order in Council of February 27th, 1905, that henceforth the Crown should always appoint to the latter and the Bishop always to the former.

The new vicar came with high ideals of organization and parochial work, and consequently he set himself to the task of re-starting several undertakings that had been allowed to lapse. One of the most important of these was a Sunday School for the Derby district, which he established in the Day Schools buildings, and of which he himself acted as

superintendent during a great part of his time. The other Sunday School in Alexandra Road continued only till 1900, when the erection of the Cottage Homes for the Workhouse children occupied the site that had been used as a school for so many years.

Another revival was the Parish Magazine, whose issue started again in January 1898, after an interval of ten years. Dr Geikie had circulated *Home Words*, but Mr Windsor preferred to attach his local news to *The Illustrated Parish Monthly*, to which he added later also *The Church Abroad*, in order to foster missionary interest.

Dr Geikie had been a strong advocate of foreign missions and of temperance work, and of both these Mr Windsor too was a zealous supporter. Many a meeting or sermon was arranged with instruction and exhortation from a missionary from abroad, and the money sent from the parish to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and other like agencies reached a considerable amount; while for the combating of the drink evil he started a senior branch of the Church of England Temperance Society, and for the Juniors a Band of Hope, the latter being more successful than the former.

Besides these there were Bible Classes, a weekly Sunday School Teachers' Meeting, a branch of the Women's Help Society—which at one time reached a very large membership, a Mothers' Meeting, a

Sewing Class, a Men's Social Club, and a branch of the King's Messengers. All these were proof of much initiative energy, and—still more—of patient continuance in the much more difficult task of keeping them efficient.

But his greatest achievement was the vicarage house. Hitherto there had been no official residence for the Vicar, and he himself for his first two or three years rented No. 18 Ebberly Lawn. As a result of his exertions, however, the parishioners raised voluntary contributions amounting to £200, and on his applying to various trusts he was happily able to raise the whole of the money required for the purchase and improvement of a house, Queen Anne's Bounty granting £690, Kellond's Charity £300, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Pyncombe's Charity £200 each, the Incumbents' Sustentation Fund £150, and the Bishop Phillpotts' Fund and the Dean Boyd's Fund £100 each; total £1940. The cost of the house was £1400, and when various alterations and additions had been effected, there was still a balance of £72, which was invested for the augmentation of the benefice. This was indeed a splendid triumph, for the Day Schools, the vicarage, and the Church Hall have been the three greatest accomplishments since the opening of the church, and of these three the vicarage was the most costly. And further, although the price paid was wonderfully low, and the money was obtained with extra-

ordinary ease—the bulk of it coming in the form of grants from Church Societies — the result is altogether a success; for the house occupies a commanding and healthy position on Fort Hill, it is roomy and well-appointed, and it stands in good though not large grounds, so that its only disadvantage is that it is somewhat distant (a third of a mile) from the church. Mr Windsor's successors therefore will ever owe to him and to the contributors to the fund a deep debt of gratitude for having obtained for the benefice so excellent a vicarage house.

The improvement wrought in the church by Mr Windsor was considerable, the chief features being the chancel and the choir vestry. The former he found paved with limestone, the steps being of Garman's Down stone. These were replaced by blocks of white and black marble, the seats being at the same time re-arranged, and the pulpit moved further to the north, so as to open the view of the altar. This work cost £70. Later on advantage was taken of the death of Dr Joseph Harper, who had been churchwarden for sixteen years, to complete the work on the chancel and to build a choir vestry in memory of him; and this was happily accomplished at the expenditure of £317, and dedicated in 1904. Besides these greater undertakings the heating was improved by the introduction of two tortoise stoves, and the lighting by supplying the chancel with gas pendants, the organ was

cleaned, and various other necessary works were done. The Day Schools, too, received their share of his attention, although he took no part in the teaching; and not only did he frequently and strenuously plead for the maintaining of them as part of the Church's heritage, but he succeeded in his effort to bring the school-room up to current requirements, laying new floors, obtaining new desks, and beautifying the walls.

His churchmanship was considerably in advance of anything that the parish had known before. Sacramental doctrine occupied a prominent place in his sermons and his teaching; he introduced daily services and Celebrations on Holy Days, and the Three Hours' Devotion on Good Friday, and the mid-day Holy Communion was sometimes accompanied by music; the eastward position, altar lights, coloured frontals and stoles, and a fald-stool were introduced; and many appointments, especially about the altar, were seen to as an encouragement to reverence and devotion. His sermons, which were delivered without manuscript, were rather of the earnest than of the learned sort, and impressed people as coming from his heart. Though unable to sing, he had a very good choir, which during the greater part of his time enjoyed the advantage of being trained by Mr Caleb Simper.

Mr Windsor was fully devoted to his parochial duties, but the success of the work was hampered

by many difficulties, of which the chief was the want of clerical help, for he was single-handed for a considerable portion of his *régime.* He was happy indeed in having the co-operation of his eldest son, the Reverend Stanley Windsor, for four years and a half; but on his departure it was hard to fill his place — the Reverend C. W. Sherard stayed only five months, the Reverend G. H. Butler left in poor health in less than four, and the Reverend A. E. Bond had been here but a short while when the Vicar himself decided to go. Besides these he was able to secure the services of a deaconess, Sister Frances Shaw, but she remained little more than a year; and his only licensed lay reader, Mr Charles Garland, took office rather late in his vicariate. Furthermore he was so unfortunate as to lose by death or removal several of his very best supporters, such as Dr Joseph Harper, Major Dimond Hogg, the Reverend J. T. Jacob and Mrs Jacob, Miss Margaret Harper, and Mr William Gammon. In addition to all this Mr Windsor suffered much sorrow from domestic troubles, for his wife's health was very poor, and during his stay here the deaths of three sons, all grown up to manhood, reduced his family to three sons and one daughter.

As a consequence of all this, and of the discouraging nature of the work, which had daunted each of his predecessors, Mr Windsor had frequently to complain of the meagreness of the congregations,

the fewness of communicants and of candidates for Confirmation, and of the smallness of the collections. He was also advancing in years, and found the physical and mental strain—from which he ought to have been relieved sooner—was telling upon his powers. He was therefore fain, after ten years of whole-hearted and strenuous work, to lay aside his responsibility and end his labours by resigning his office, which he did on April 30th, 1907.

In testimony of their appreciation of his services to their church and parish, the people collected the sum of £92, which by his desire (being of independent means) was handed over to the churchwardens to enable them to wipe off some liabilities that hampered various Church funds. Several smaller personal gifts, however, he consented to accept, including a revolving book-case; and these he took with him to Exmouth, where he made his home, and where he has always been ready to assist the clerical staff of the parish. From time to time he re-visits the scene of his labours, and his former flock are ever happy to be recipients of his cheery greeting and his hearty hand-shake, and to see and hear in the pulpit of their church their old friend and devoted worker.

CHAPTER XI.

The vicariate of the Reverend Robert James Edmund Boggis.

The sixth vicar came of East Anglian stock, his ancestors having been settled for five centuries or more in or near the valley of the Stour, chiefly at Colchester in Essex and at Edwardstone in Suffolk; and his immediate forebears were clerical, his father, the Reverend Thomas Boggis, having been Rector of Sampford Spiney in Devonshire, and his grandfather, the Reverend Isaac Rolfe Boggis, having given up the military profession for Holy Orders and a curacy in Essex.

Born on July 19th, 1863, at Aldborough in Yorkshire, where his father held a curacy at the time, he was of Devonshire up-bringing, Tavistock being his home, and Kelly College his school, of which he was captain for three years. He graduated at Cambridge as a scholar of Peterhouse, taking honours in the theological tripos (second class in part 1, and first class in part 2), and winning the Scholefield and the Jeremie Septuagint University prizes. He also held a Phillpotts

Studentship at Cambridge, and there he took the further degrees of Master of Arts and Bachelor of Divinity, to which he afterwards added the degree of Bachelor of Divinity at Durham University. At the Advent Ordination in Exeter Cathedral in 1887 he was admitted to Holy Orders by Bishop Bickersteth, who ordained him priest a year later, his title being the assistant curacy of Wolborough with Newton Abbot. After about two years there he was appointed Senior Diocesan Inspector of Schools for the diocese of Exeter, and five years later he was chosen by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London to be Sub-Warden of St Augustine's Missionary College at Canterbury, a post that he continued to hold for twelve years, until in 1907 he was presented by the Bishop of Exeter as patron to the benefice of St Mary Magdalene's, Barnstaple, in succession to his friend and former fellow-curate, Mr Windsor.

One of his first schemes was to establish a Church Synod, as a consultative body without legislative power—except when asked to undertake any special work. It comprises the clergy, lay reader, churchwardens, sidesmen, clerk, organist, sacristan, and representatives of parochial organizations; and various projects have been entrusted to it for carrying into effect, such as Church Improvement, the acquisition of a Church Hall, the Pageant, Bazaars, Socials, etc.

The Church Improvement Scheme included the heating, electric-lighting, paving, flooring, and ventilating of the church, upon which was expended the sum of £450. Other branches of improvement followed, such as the furnishing and decorating of the Lady Chapel, the obtaining of pictures and coloured windows, the provision of carpet-seatings and hassocks and books, and other matters, which brought up the total cost to over £1200. Besides this the erection of the Church Hall, adjoining the church, has happily supplied a need that had been acutely felt—doubtless ever since the parish was formed.

Having a voice useful for singing the Vicar was able to encourage church music, and his first-rate choir very soon adopted the custom of rendering an anthem every Sunday Evening (except in Advent and Lent), and gradually attained to the standard (reached in 1914) of a choral celebration of Holy Communion on Sundays and great festivals. Processions were instituted on high days before the Holy Communion and after Evensong, with the singing of "Hail! festal day" to Baden Powell's setting, or the Litany from the Prayer Book, or a hymn; the more solemn seasons being marked by the performance of such a work as J. H. Maunder's "Olivet to Calvary" in Holy Week, or the alternate singing of the Miserere in Lent and the "Story of the Cross" in Passiontide, or the Rogation Litany in Rogationtide. The music was helped

by the introduction (in 1907) of the new edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and by the purchase for the choir of a supply of *The Cathedral Prayer Book*, whose musical settings for the various services were taken into use, including the admirable Merbecke music for the Burial Service. Moreover sufficient hymn-books were provided for the whole congregation, and also a considerable stock of Prayer Books and Bibles—through the generous grants of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge and the Thomas Palmer Acland trustees.

The Vicar was so fortunate as to have the co-operation of colleagues who were, each in his own way, men of ability or devotion to duty, Messrs J. W. H. Sowerbutts, G. Harris Arundell, C. W. Winch, and J. L. Brodie succeeding one another with but brief intervals, as assistant curates, with Mr L. E. Wilding as lay reader. He was also most happy in obtaining the very valuable services of Deaconess Agnes Hellins of the Exeter Diocesan Deaconess Institution for work especially among the poor.

Among efforts to extend the Church's influence in the parish mention must be made of a twelve days' Mission conducted by the Diocesan Missioners, a six months' visit of a Church Army van, out-of-door preaching in the streets and courts, services in the school and in cottages, and popular services, sometimes with the aid

of lantern-pictures, in the church and the church hall.

The Vicar's churchmanship was shown by his loyal obedience to the letter and spirit of the *Book of Common Prayer* and his endeavour to follow English precedent. He established the Holy Communion as the principal service of Sunday, and marked all Holy Days and also Wednesdays and Fridays (the old Station Days) by celebrations of the Sacrament, together with a children's service and an evening sermon on Saints' Days. He observed the Patronal Festival (July 22nd) and the Dedication Festival of the Church (November 10th) with all honour. He tried to secure due publicity and dignity for the sacrament of Baptism by ministering it only on Sundays and other Holy Days and having a choir present. Confession, and fasting, and prayers for the departed found their place in his practice and teaching, and he was president of the North Devon district branch of the English Church Union.

In matters of ritual he considered himself bound to obey the Ornaments Rubric in the *Book of Common Prayer*, and therefore he introduced the wearing of the eucharistic vestments, some very handsome ones for the whole English sequence of colours being provided, and the use begun in 1908, and gradually adopted in its entirety. Such usage was then unknown in any parish church in North Devon, and consequently considerable interest and

some opposition were aroused, the Kensit party devoting more than one visit of a week's duration to the task of protesting and stirring up strife, and a certain Canadian evangelist, who had come to Barnstaple for a three months' Mission, virulently attacking the Vicar's doctrines and practices. Their success however was small; on the contrary the Kensitite abuse made the congregation all the keener to defend their church, and the Town Council "moved on" the Canadian by refusing him the further use of their hall on the score that he was indulging in religious controversy instead of preaching the gospel. An instructive commentary on all this is supplied by the fact that the communicants at St Mary Magdalene's on the next Easter Day were more numerous than had ever before been known in the history of the parish.

He endeavoured to do something to help on the great cause of the re-union of Christendom by cultivating friendly relations with Nonconformists, inviting to his vicarage ministers of all denomination to pray and discuss together topics bearing on that subject, and arranging a joint preaching Mission in the streets with the object of inviting the indifferent and irreligious to attend some place of worship. Consequently he had the experience—unusual for a priest of the Church of England—of preaching out-of-doors with a Salvation Army flag waving over his head, and also (still more unusual) of being defended by a Nonconformist minister in

a speech at a public dinner for his wearing of the eucharistic vestments.

Parochial organizations included branches of the Church of England Men's Society, of the Mothers' Union, and of the King's Messengers, a Band of Hope, a monthly Missionary Working Party, a Women's Sewing Class, District Visitors, a Coal Club, and Bible Classes and Sunday Schools; besides which the Vicar was accustomed to give in Advent and Lent to men and to women courses of lectures on some book of the Bible or on the Prayer Book services, and occasionally a lecture on the Holy Land—whither he had gone on pilgrimage in the spring of 1912.

The Pageant, which was organized by the Vicar, was a very ambitious undertaking, and proved in every way a splendid success, being almost entirely the outcome of local talent. Five scenes of Barnstaple tradition or history were represented, viz., the preaching of St Brannock, King Athelstan founding Barnstaple Fair, Sir Richard Grenville enlisting recruits to fight against the Armada, Prince Charles at Barnstaple, and the arrest of the Reverend Martin Blake. About two hundred performers took part in the Pageant, which was set in the Barnstaple Theatre in January, 1914, and it aroused very considerable interest in the whole county, and indeed far beyond, being noticed in the press throughout England.

Mr Boggis, just before his arrival in Barnstaple, married Caroline Emily, eldest daughter of the late Allan Maclean Skinner, C.M.G., of Canterbury and formerly Resident Councillor of Penang, and niece of the well-known engineer, Sir William Shelford, K.C.M.G., M.I.C.E. She bore him two sons and a daughter.

Before coming here he was the author of *Exeter Cathedral, Historical, Architectural, and Descriptive* (1894), *A History of St Augustine's Monastery, Canterbury* (1901), *and a History of St Augustine's College, Canterbury* (1907). He has also edited *Lectures on Pastoral Theology* by the late Dr G. F. Maclear (1904), *The Occasional Papers of St Augustine's College, Canterbury* (1897—1907), and the *Handbook of the Theological Colleges of the Church of England and the Episcopal Church of Scotland* (1904—1915). During his vicariate he has published in 1913 *Praying for the Dead, an historical review of the practice*, and in 1914 *The Pageant Book of the Historical Pageant of Old Barnstaple*, and also *Revision of the Book of Common Prayer from the point of view of a Parish Priest.*

CHAPTER XII.

St Mary Magdalene's Church.

The Committee responsible for the building of the new church were indeed fortunate in securing such a first-rate architect as Mr Benjamin Ferrey. Of Huguenot descent, he was a native of Christchurch, Hampshire, and as a boy would sit for hours in the Priory Church there, making drawings of the architectural features of the building; as he did also later at Wimborne, where he had his education at the Grammar School. Thus his love for architecture was almost innate, and it was developed by Augustus Pugin, Senior, whose pupil he became at an early age, the more famous son, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, being his fellow-student. When on June 6th, 1844, he was chosen as architect of St Mary Magdalene's, Barnstaple, he was still a young man, being only thirty-four years old; but he had already established his reputation, for two years before he had superintended the restoration of Wells Cathedral, and then he had designed the costly Church of St James at Morpeth. His office was in Great Russell Street,

Bloomsbury, and for the next twenty years he was "one of the best employed and best liked architects of his day" *(Dictionary of National Biography)*, excelling in both ecclesiastical and domestic work, but chiefly the former, and being devoted mostly to the Gothic style; and for nearly forty years (until his death in 1880) he held the post of honorary diocesan architect for Bath and Wells.

The church that he planned for us is a really beautiful and well-proportioned edifice of transitional Early English style, and is an unusually favourable example of its time. It consists of a sanctuary, a choir flanked by side chapels, a nave and aisles with arcades of five arches, and a south porch with tower and spire above it. There is a doorway at the west end of the nave, and another in the north aisle, opposite the south porch, and a small clergy vestry north of the sanctuary. All these belong to the original fabric, and there is also a choir vestry of recent date, adjoining the north wall of the north chapel. The dimensions of the building are these:—exterior length 122 feet, interior length 111 feet, exterior breadth (including porch and choir vestry) 89 feet, interior breadth 48 feet, height of nave (from floor to apex of roof) 35 feet, height of tower and spire (to the top of the vane) 120 feet.

The sum of money available for the building and the furnishing of the church was very small in

amount, and consequently the fittings had to be of the cheapest description, as—most wisely and most fortunately—the fabric was thoroughly good and well constructed, except that the outside walls had much perishable stone incorporated in them. One result of the scarcity of funds was that the church was paved with flags of a sort of grey limestone, and under the wooden flooring was left a vacant space. The flag-stones were dull in appearance, and "sweated" profusely in damp weather, while, owing to imperfect ventilation, dry rot was working havoc with the joists and boards; so the first care of the Church Improvement Scheme Committee of 1908, acting under the guidance of Mr John S. Lee, A.R.I.B.A., was to fill in the space beneath the floor (except at the west end), and to set on concrete beds red tiling in the alleys and red deal blocks for the flooring. Mr William Bryant of Barnstaple did this work, except the tiling, which was entrusted to Mr John Way of Dartmouth, and at the same time the tall and graceful octagonal pillars were scraped by the former. Previous to this (in 1901) the chancel had been paved with black and white marble, and (in 1904) as a memorial of Dr Joseph Harper three steps of the same material had been placed in position to raise the altar, the altar-rails (which were the gift of the architect, Mr B. Ferrey) being at the same time moved some feet westwards in order to make the sanctuary more spacious.

The seating consists of fixed benches of deal, stained a dark colour, and the seats for the choir are of the same cheap material. Originally the church was said to have 802 sittings, but now, the pews having been set at a more convenient distance from each other, there is comfortable accommodation for only about 550. Red hassocks were supplied in 1910, the cost (£18) being covered by the sale of a book entitled *Hints for the Home*, which was edited by Mrs Boggis; and about the same time the pews were provided by the expenditure of £31 with red and black felt carpet-seating from the warehouse of Mr F. Kempe of Barnstaple. The stalls for the clergy, made to match the other wood-work, were given by the Reverend A. W. L. Rivett. Originally there were two parclose screens, stained the same colour as the seats; but in 1884 these were removed from the archways on either side of the choir, and set in the openings between the chapels and the aisles. The timber of the roof, which is an open one of beautiful design, is of chestnut.

The pulpit and the font (the latter being the gift of the Reverend Dr R. Hayne, Vicar of Pilton) are of Caen stone, the one being octagonal in shape and raised six steps above the floor of the church, and the other round and set on one step. Originally the font fittingly occupied a central position near the west end of the nave, but it was shifted to a place near the south door in 1899. Its flat cover

of oak, mounted in iron, was given by Mr Percy Windsor and Mr William Bryant in 1898; the oak ewer, bound with brass, was presented in 1903 by Mrs Emma Sanders; and the baptismal shell of mother-of-pearl and silver was provided by Mrs Shephard in 1904.

The high altar, which cost £10, was the gift of Mr John Knill Cotton (a former Mayor of Barnstaple), Mrs Pycroft providing a covering of crimson silk, with a gold monogram from the Misses Barnes, while Miss Roberts gave velvet cushions for the altar and the pulpit at the expense of £7-13-0. These appurtenances of the altar have long since been superseded, and from various sources there have been provided a set of frontals and super-frontals (white, red, green, brown, red-and-black, violet, and black), and a wooden book-rest (given by Mr J. P. Gammon in 1898). There are also an oak gradine (an offering of Miss A. T. Sparkes), dorsal hangings behind the altar, wing curtains (festal ones presented by Mrs Boggis in 1910 and ferial ones by Mrs. Gallie of Tavistock), carved oak panelling against the east wall (the gift of the Reverend E. J. Windsor and Mrs Windsor in 1907), and curtains to cover the side walls. The brass altar cross was purchased in 1892, the two altar candlesticks in 1903, and the oak standard candlesticks in 1908. Two Communion Books costing £6-6-0 were given by the Reverend C. Luxmoore and the Reverend W. L. Elliot, while the

Reverend J. J. Scott presented folio Bible and Book of Common Prayer. The holy vessels of silver, consisting of a paten, two chalices, a massive flagon, and an almsdish, are a proof of the generosity of the Recorder of Barnstaple, Mr W. M. Praed, a smaller paten and two glass cruets mounted in silver being purchased more recently. The credence—an oak table about two hundred years old—was given by the Vicar in 1915. A pair of handsome chairs were provided when the church was built, and a Glastonbury chair has been added since. For illuminating on zinc plates the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, Mr Charles Hudson of Pentonville received £20, which, if we may judge by the first item—still preserved on the east wall—was astonishingly overpaid work. The processional crucifix was given by Mr J. P. Gammon in 1912, and the banner was purchased in 1904.

The sanctuary is adorned with two coloured windows. The five-light east window, which is coæval with the church—it was a poor time for stained glass, but this is not obtrusively bad—has in the bottom row the Madonna with the Holy Child and the four Major Prophets; in the middle five scenes from the life of St Mary Magdalene (her cure, her ministering to the Lord, the Crucifixion, her arrival at the tomb, and her meeting the risen Saviour); in the row above, the Ascension and the four Evangelists; and in the top tracery the

pelican in her piety, the Agnus Dei, and the coats-of-arms of the United Kingdom and of the Archdiocese of Canterbury and of the Diocese of Exeter. For this window and its fixing Mr Charles Hudson was paid the surprisingly small sum of £78-8-3, more than half of which came from the Luxmoore family. The south window, which happily is seen by few persons, has gaudily coloured portraits of King Solomon at the building and at the dedication of the Temple, inserted in 1855 to commemorate Mr John Thomas Britton, who was a Freemason.

Other articles of church furniture include a handsome brass eagle-lectern with Bible and marble step and wooden pedestal, given by Miss A. T. Sparkes; three handsomely bound service-books from Dr John R. Harper in commemoration of his mayoralty (1911-12); a neatly carved oak fald-stool from Mr William Gammon; an old oak table, purchased in 1904; a standing alms-box, presented at the opening of the church by the Reverend R. H. Podmore; churchwardens' staves from Mr W. C. Bartlett in 1913; a bookcase from Mrs Boggis in 1908; a hymn-board from Mr J. P. Gammon; a letter-box from Mr James Hussell; an alms-box in the porch from Mr Percy Windsor; and coloured glass in the gable window from Mr T. W. Harding.

The well-proportioned but diminutive south chapel was long used as an organ-chamber and place for the singers. Here was set the seraphim, which used to accompany the singing in the early

years of the church, and which was succeeded in 1867 by a small pipe-organ from Exeter—remarkable for having the usual arrangement of white and black notes reversed. Then, when the new organ was placed on the other side and the choir were robed, this chapel was converted into a choir vestry. Later it served as a sort of lumber-room, until on January 18th, 1914, it was dedicated as a Lady Chapel, the cost of the work, amounting to £100, being given or collected by the Vicar. The mural and roof decorations and the painting of the screens (a new parclose one being provided—carved by Mr William Hussell) were executed by Mr William E. Phillips from the designs of Mr John S. Lee, A.R.I.B.A., of London, prominence being given to the initial letter M and the emblems of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The altar was formerly in use in Fritton Church in Norfolk, and afterwards in Denby Church in Yorkshire, and was presented to our church by the Vicar of the latter parish, the Reverend R. E. Taglis. The cross and candlesticks were specially designed by the architect, and were given as memorials of Miss M. Marsh, the former by the Marsh family and the latter by Miss F. Roberts. Altar frontals have been provided by the generosity of Mrs G. F. Lefroy, and the altar-piece, an old picture of the Holy Family, by Canon F. A. Lefroy, Vicar of Haresfield in Gloucestershire. The credence was transferred from the sanctuary, the sanctuary lamp was an anonymous gift, the lectern

was brought from Countisbury on the presentation of the Reverend C. E. Treadwell, and the desks were purchased when the Chapel was furnished.

In early days the north chapel was sometimes occupied by the school-children, but in 1884 a new organ with two manuals and eighteen stops, built by James Philpott of Exeter for £242, was erected here, the money being raised by Mr H. T. Besley, who in that year became Mayor of Barnstaple; and then for the first time the singers were placed in the chancel, though as yet, being a mixed choir, they were not habited in surplices.

A scheme of subjects has been elaborated for filling all the windows with coloured glass. According to this the six windows in the north aisle are to contain scenes from the life of the Patron Saint, viz., (1) her cure, (2) her ministering to the Lord, (3) the Crucifixion, (4) her presence at His burial, (5) her resorting early to the sepulchre, and (6) the risen Saviour appearing to her. The west windows of the nave would portray (7) the General Resurrection and (8) the Last Judgment. In the south aisle would be a series of characters of local interest:—(9) the two early missionaries of North Devon, St Brannock and St Petrock, (10) the two first Devonshire martyrs, St Sidwell and St Boniface, (11) King Athelstan, traditional founder of Barnstaple, and St Peter, Patron Saint of the mother-church of Barnstaple, (12) Joel of Totnes, founder of St Mary Magdalene's Priory, and Bishop Phill-

potts, consecrator of this church, and (13) Queen Victoria, in whose reign this church was built, and King Edward VII. And the Lady Chapel would have (14 and 15) the Annunciation, and (16) the Nativity.

A start was made in 1911 when No. 13 was paid for by public subscription to commemorate King Edward VII, this being the first church in England to erect a memorial of His late Majesty; and in the same year Nos. 11 and 12 were given by the Harper family in memory of their father Dr Joseph Harper and their mother Mrs Augusta Mary Harper. The designer and maker of these windows was Mr Hugh Arnold of Kensington.

Through the munificence of an anonymous donor a series of fourteen pictures, commonly known as "the Stations of the Cross," were placed in position on the walls of our church in 1911 and 1912. They were painted by Charles Beyaert of Bruges, being copies of a set by Rosier, and are done in oils on zinc, and effectively framed in solid oak, adorned with a little gold. Skilful in design and execution, rich in colour, and religious in tone, they prove to be not only a beautiful adornment of the church, but also a devotional guide to help people to realize more fully what the Son of Man had to suffer when he "gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God." Indeed it is very seldom that so admirable a set of pictures can be seen in any church. Their cost was £200.

The only noteworthy sculptures in the church are the twelve stone corbels that support the roof of the nave, four of which, costing £2 each, were paid for by the Reverend Henry Luxmoore. They may be identified as follows (commencing from the east):—(1) the head of Queen Victoria, (2) the arms of England, (3) the arms of Adelaide (of Saxe-Meiningen), the Queen Dowager, (4) the head of Archbishop Howley of Canterbury, (5) the head of Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter, (6) the arms of the See of Exeter, impaling Phillpotts, (7) the arms of the Archdeaconry of Barnstaple, impaling Barnes, (8) the arms of the Borough of Barnstaple, (9) the arms of the Fortescue family, (10) the arms of the Acland family, (11) the arms of the Chichester family, and (12) the arms of the Harding family. These four families were fittingly honoured in this way, as having been among the most generous contributors to the building fund of the church, as was also the Queen Dowager.

The church is warmed by a hot air apparatus, introduced by Mr John Grundy of London in 1908, with an underground chamber and furnace outside the west door, which took the place of the two tortoise stoves that stood in the church before, the cost being £133. At the same time on the advice of Mr J. W. Hadfield, the borough electrical engineer, Messrs Edmundsons of Westminster were commissioned to install their system of electric lighting, the total expense for eighty-eight lights amounting

to £87. This is found much more efficacious than the previous gas lights; besides which, it was a decided gain to be able to banish the heavy gas brackets, which, attached to the pillars, were a serious disfigurement to the church.

The small clergy vestry is part of the original structure of the church, and contains the register-books, the holy vessels, surplices and tippets for the clergy, and several sets of handsome vestments —white, red, green, brown, and red-and-black chasubles and dalmatics, violet and black chasubles, and a white tunicle.

The choir vestry was built in 1904 by Mr William Bryant from plans by Mr G. H. Fellowes Prynne, F.R.I.B.A., this and the remodelling of the chancel being a public memorial of Dr Joseph Harper, who died in 1902. The vestry contains a harmonium, and cassocks and surplices for thirty-eight singers (a new set of surplices having been provided in 1907); and it is adorned with portraits of Vicars Pycroft, Bull, Geikie, Rivett, and Windsor, and of Churchwarden Joseph Harper, and choir-groups of 1909 and 1913. Here is also a supply of palm branches from the Riviera, which are carried in procession on Palm Sunday, and are made into little crosses for public distribution in church.

The tower and spire—the munificent gift of the first vicar, the Reverend James Pycroft—are surmounted by a weather-cock, for making which Mr G. K. Cotton paid Mr W. Britton £5-15-0, the

iron work being provided by Mr James Moon. There is ample space for a peal of bells, but the money has not yet been forthcoming. There are two small bells in the tower. The smaller one, which is unhung, was brought from the Day School, and was rung during the early years of the church's existence; but being found to be poor in tone and insufficient for its purpose, another bell was obtained, and is still in use. This has an interesting history, and is believed to be the oldest bell in Barnstaple. In mediæval times it belonged to St Nicholas's Chapel, which stood on the quay at the bottom of Cross Street, and which was bought from the Crown by the Barnstaple Corporation in 1550 and converted into the Quay Hall. When the Hall and the contiguous West Gate were demolished in 1852, there was no further use for the bell, which was subsequently purchased by Mr J. May Miller for £2, and given by him to the Reverend H. J. Bull for St Mary Magdalene's Church.

Adjoining the church on the north-east is an excellent Church Hall. It had served as a chapel-of-ease for Woolacombe in the parish of Mortehoe, and was purchased by our Church Synod for the sum of £32-10-0 in 1912, re-erected here by Mr George Garland under the direction of Mr Bruce Oliver, A.R.I.B.A., fitted with electric light and gas radiators, fully furnished, and enclosed by iron railings—all for the remarkably moderate expenditure of £240. Its usefulness has been

enhanced by the generous gift of a piano from Deaconess Agnes Hellins.

The chief pride of the churchyard, and one of the most beautiful things in Barnstaple, is the splendid avenue of lime trees that shades the south approach, and in addition many ornamental shrubs have been planted here by Mr William Hutchings and Mr F. J. Codd. The ground was used as a cemetery from the time of its consecration until August 26th, 1903, when it was closed for ordinary interments by an Order in Council. Among those buried here have been two centenarians:—Mrs Mary Westacott of Gaydon Street, who died in 1864 at the age of 102, and whose inscription is cut on the west boundary wall, and Mrs Elizabeth Rogers, formerly of Prince's Street, who died in the Workhouse in 1890 at the age of 102.

It is worth while to record here the original cost of this church. The payments included £514 for the purchase of the site and churchyard, £2597 for the building and fitting of the church (without the tower and spire), £469 for building the tower and spire, £28 for furniture, £78 for the coloured east window, £93 for laying out and fencing the churchyard, £30 for the consecration, £190 to the architect, £160 to the clerk of the works, and £25 to the secretary of the Committee. Thus the whole work was completed in every respect, and the church provided with all that was necessary for its sacred purpose, for the extremely moderate sum of

£4364. Our church, then, was a much cheaper one than the contemporary Church of the Holy Trinity, on which (apart from the cost of the site, which was given,) was expended the sum of £6000, though a considerably smaller edifice; whereas, without reckoning the purchase-money of the site, St Mary Magdalene's cost only £3850.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Day Schools.

It was a very serious detriment that, when the parish was constituted and provided with a church, no public school was established for the training of the young parishioners. True, a scheme was set on foot at that time for starting a school in the south-west corner of the field on which the church was built, but nothing seems to have been accomplished; and though a few years later (in 1853) the enterprise of the Wesleyans led them to make suitable provision for the children of this part of the town, church-people showed no such energy until the vicariate of the Reverend Henry John Bull (1856—1883).

Mr Bull was a keen educationalist, and he wisely recognised that one of the chief needs of his parish was the erection of a school in the very heart of the Derby District, where not only should the faith of the Church be taught, but also some vigorous and systematic effort should be made to lessen the gross ignorance and to curb the unruly behaviour and the low moral habits, which were

so rife in the slums of his poor parish. Doubtless he grasped the situation at once, and set before himself the accomplishment of this great ideal; but his own means were only small, and a large sum of money would be required for the purpose, so that a considerable time had to elapse before the scheme could be carried through to completion.

At last, however, his labours were crowned with success, and Tuesday, May 15th, 1861, was appointed for the dedication of this, one of the most important and most beneficent schemes of modern Barnstaple, a date that will ever be worthy of commemoration as one of the most notable dates connected with our parish. Happy Mr Bull! How proudly pleased he must have felt as on the afternoon of that day he conducted a Thanksgiving Service in the church, and preached a sermon on the text, "Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?" (Ezra V. 3); and then, escorting to the new building the large assembly of local clergy and gentry and others, offered up the dedicatory prayers, and addressed the crowded gathering, and presided over the invitation tea that was spread in the school-room for the refreshment of the numerous guests. Truly this was a good and meritorious work, and the Reverend Henry John Bull must ever be remembered by all future generations as one of the chief benefactors of the parish.

The land on which the school was built was a portion of a property that thirty years before was known as "The Rack Close" or "Maudlin Easter Close"—part of the estate of the ancient Priory of St Mary Magdalene. The plot selected was a corner piece at the bottom of Lower Maudlin Street, with a frontage of 122 feet, and a maximum width of 144 feet. This was conveyed on April 5th, 1860, for the sum of £150 by Mr William Snow of Barnstaple, school-master, to the Reverend Henry John Bull and the Churchwardens, Mr Charles Henry Hiern and Mr Hugh Ballment, the purpose being specified as "to be for ever hereafter appropriated and used as and for a school for the education of children and adults or children only of the labouring, manufacturing, and other poorer classes in the parish of Barnstaple;" and in the deed of conveyance there was inserted—doubtless at Mr Bull's particular desire—a declaration that "the principal officiating minister for the time being of the said Church of Saint Mary Magdalene shall have the superintendence of the religious and moral instruction of all the scholars attending such school, and may use or direct the premises to be used for a Sunday School under his exclusive control and management."

When first established the school, which had cost £510, consisted only of one long building, an end being parted off as a class-room, and there boys, girls, and infants were housed all together;

for it was not till four years later that a separate infants' department was started, accommodation being found for them in a building at the bottom of Union Street (where for some years previous to 1861 an infants' school had been carried on), until the present Infants' School, adjoining the main edifice, was opened for them in 1865. Obviously the school supplied a need, for very soon it had a roll of some 200 children on the books; and though the establishing of a separate infants' department took off about half of this number, the senior school gradually grew and grew, until at the present time there are 150 on the register of the senior school, and 140 juniors. The daily curriculum consisted at first simply of "the four R's"—religious instruction, reading, writing, and arithmetic; but singing, dictation, and sewing also soon found a place in the time-table, and occasionally grammar and geography, English history too being added before long.

But the success of the school was hampered by serious difficulties. The head-masters were mostly young men, who lacked experience; the staff was lamentably small, and often incompetent; the children were terribly unruly, and many were utterly ignorant, and would come to school ragged and in a filthy state; and when a child had been punished, the parents would not unfrequently force their way into the school and violently abuse the master. Little wonder that the Inspectors annually

reported unfavourably of the school, both as to discipline and the children's attainments; little wonder too that the poor pedagogues found themselves unable to cope with the difficulties of the post, and sent in their resignations—indeed so frequently did this happen, that during the first seventeen years of its existence the school had as many as eight regular head-masters, besides one appointed temporarily. The next master, however, held office for eighteen years, and, acting on his recorded opinion that "some of the bigger boys appear to require a periodical thrashing, which they get," he was able to enforce a stricter discipline, and raised the school to a higher state of efficiency than it had ever known before; and, though afterwards he allowed the old bad traditions to re-assert themselves, his successor, Mr W. H. H. Martin, whose appointment was the first instance of the promotion to the headship of one who had been an assistant master, and who has already ably ruled for nineteen years, has now for a long period won for his school splendid reports from both the Government and the Diocesan Inspectors. The teachers' efforts are now no longer trammelled, as used to be the case, by that hardest of hard tasks—the schooling of half-timers, big lads who worked in the lace-factory in the morning, and were obliged to attend school in the afternoons, and who were so strong and so unmanageable that one head-master is said to have had a leg broken in a

struggle to overcome one of them. And although —as the Inspectors declare from time to time in their reports—the outward conditions are exceptionally discouraging, the school is a happy example of success achieved by the employment of a larger and more competent staff, the provision of better accommodation, and the generous supply of good equipment of all kinds.

These remarks apply equally to the Infants' Department, except that it seems to have fared better in the earlier period. Certainly during the lengthy headship of Miss Kemp, and since then under Miss Cousins—their terms of office have lasted for forty years—high excellence has been maintained in every respect, as high as in the Mixed Department.

With much *éclat* the Jubilee of the School was observed on Monday, May 15th, 1911—exactly the fiftieth anniversary of its formal opening. In the morning there was a special celebration of the Holy Communion, and in the afternoon a public Thanksgiving Service in the church, to which all past and present pupils of the Schools were invited. A tea was then provided for the children, and games on the school premises, speeches being delivered by the Vicar and others; and there followed a first-rate entertainment in the Theatre Royal, a Patriotic Cantata and other items being performed by the children under the direction of the teachers.

At the Thanksgiving Service the preacher was —most fittingly—the Reverend C. R. Bull, a son of the Founder; and the form, which was specially sanctioned by the Bishop of the diocese, included the following appropriate hymn and prayers, which may suitably be preserved in this book. The prayers, it may be remarked, are used annually in church on the day of the Diocesan Inspection of the Day Schools, when early in the morning the teachers gather together for a special celebration of the Holy Communion, and the children for a short service.

HYMN.

Praise to thee, Almighty Father,
Who this pious work hast blest,
Granting fifty years completed,
And our School still prosperest.
Praise to thee that soundest teaching
Here is offered free to all,
Hallowed by the Church's doctrine:
Therefore keep we festival.

Thanks to thee for lives ennobled—
Children taught to love their Lord,
Learning creed and prayer and precept
Based upon thy sacred Word.
Thanks besides for generous Founder,
Benefactors ever nigh,
Friends who foster their foundation,
Teachers setting standard high.

Pray we therefore that thy blessing
On this School may e'er descend;
That its work on earth commencing,
Heaven itself may see the end.
Pray we too that those our founders
Now may rest before their Lord,
And, when he appears in glory,
They may find their full reward. Amen.

Thanksgiving for the work of the Founders of the Schools.

We thank thee, O Father, for the life and work of the Reverend Henry John Bull, Founder of our Schools, and other our benefactors, by whose zeal and generosity has been provided for this parish a school of sound learning and religious education, wherein during fifty years past many generations of the young have been fitted and prepared to serve thee in Church and State. Remember to them for good, we pray thee, this their piety; grant that they, having by the will of God fallen asleep, may rest in the peace of paradise, and may find mercy of the Lord in that day, and a full reward for their good deeds; and let thy benediction continue to abide with their foundation, that knowledge and religion may be fostered therein, to thy glory and the benefit of thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Prayer for the present Schools.

Regard, we beseech thee, O Lord, our supplications for our Schools, and pour the blessings of thy grace upon the Managers, the Teachers, and the Scholars, that all in their several vocations may strive earnestly to do their duty to thee and to one another. Unite them in the bonds of Christian sympathy and love; grant to those who are in authority wisdom and courage, patience and holiness of life; and to those committed to their charge discipline and diligence, intelligence and thankful hearts; that they all, having served thee faithfully here, may together meet before thy throne in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Prayer for past Scholars.

Be gracious, O Lord, to all those who in the past have shared in the educational advantages of these our Schools. May they always bear in grateful remembrance those who have provided their training and teaching, and may the lessons taught ever continue to produce true wisdom and Christian character; that the seed sown here may year by year be yielding a richer harvest; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XIV.

St Mary Magdalene's Parish.

St Mary Magdalene's parish forms an irregular block, bounded on the north by the River Yeo; on the west by Boutport Street and Queen Street (except that from the River Yeo as far as Vicarage Street this line lies a few yards east of Boutport Street); on the south by a line running between Aze's Lane and Hardaway Head, and continuing a few yards west of Fort Terrace to the beginning of Pulchrass Street, and thence in a straight line to the angle of Sowden Lane, close to Mountlands; and on the east by Lower Sowden Lane, a line drawn thence to Zephyr Cottage, the road from Zephyr Cottage to the Derby Lace Factory, and a line from there to join the River Yeo north-east of the bottom of Prince's Street. The greatest length from east to west is 990 yards, and the greatest width from north to south 725 yards. The parish is almost entirely surrounded by the mother-parish, being contiguous with Holy Trinity only at Aze's Lane and Fort Terrace; and residents in country houses in the suburbs of Barnstaple have to pass

through the heart of our parish and by the gates of our churchyard, if they wish to go to St Peter's—their own parish church.

The area thus enclosed is forty-two acres, which seems small indeed when compared with the Temple Area at Jerusalem, which is thirty-five acres, or when it is realized that it is little more than thrice the size of the ground covered by the Great Pyramid. It is rather smaller than the sister-parish of Holy Trinity (whose area is forty-seven acres), while the mother-parish, from which it was formed, is seventeen times its size (720 acres). Indeed the *Exeter Diocesan Calendar*—though it must be allowed that its returns are not complete—shows only two benefices as having smaller acreage in the diocese.

As originally formed the parish was much smaller, being only about half the present area; but by an Order in Council, bearing date March 8th, 1886, there were added portions of the mother-parish, viz., all those parts of the present parish that lie beyond the Derby Lace Factory, and east of Richmond Street and of Alexandra Road, and south of the top of Aze's Lane; and also the block of houses that fronts Boutport Street and extends half way up Bear Street and a short way along Queen Street.

It is evident that at first the parish consisted almost exclusively of the very poorest parts of the town. Indeed instead of adopting a territorial

plan, and forming one quarter or region of Barnstaple into a new parish, scrupulous care was taken, by a highly artificial and anomalous drawing of boundary lines, to ensure that as far as possible every house that would rank above an artizan's cottage, and even every shop, should be kept in the mother-parish. This was grossly unfair to St Mary Magdalene's ; and though the inequality has not yet been wholly done away with, great credit is due to Dr Geikie, whose effort to obtain an alteration of boundaries was so successful, that there were added to his parish the better class houses in Ebberly Lawn, Alexandra Road, Fort Street, and Fort Terrace, the remainder of Bear Street, and some of the frontage of Boutport Street, as well as unoccupied land on which were afterwards erected Hills View, Sunflower Road, Bicton Street, and a few villa residences on Fort Hill and at the top of Bear Street Road.

The population of the whole of Barnstaple according to the census of 1841 amounted to 7902, and of these 2200 were assigned to the newly-formed parish. By the enlargement of the parish, brought about by Dr Geikie's effort (though it was not accomplished till after he had left), and by the building of new houses, the population has now been doubled, the last census (1911) giving the number as 4429. This total is at present practically stationary, for though new houses have recently been erected in the Rackfield, one of the poorest

of the streets (Corser Street) is gradually being depopulated, and some of its dwellings have already been demolished. The population of the mother-parish is 3007, and that of Holy Trinity 2166, while Pilton has 2364 inhabitants, and Newport 2157; so that not only is ours the most populous of the five Barnstaple parishes, but it has nearly as many people as any two of the others put together, and numbers almost one-third of the total of the five parishes.

Boutport Street, whose name is said to mean "about the port," *i.e.*, "around the town," is of semi-circular form, and extends around the site of the old walls on the east side of Barnstaple, part of it forming the west boundary of our parish. It is one of the ancient features of the place, appearing in the records in the fourteenth century, and being doubtless even much older than that; and in the days of the priory the part between the convent gateway and the town was known as "Magdalene Passe."* Two annexes of Boutport Street, Lovering's Court and Lock's Court, preserve the names of their last century owners, though the latter was formerly known as Barron's Court.

The chief thoroughfare of the parish is Bear Street, which traverses it from north-west to south-east, dividing it into two nearly equal parts, and which from olden times has constituted the principal approach to Barnstaple from the east. In the

**Records*, vol. 2, p. 172.

Barnstaple Records we find it mentioned as early as A.D. 1303, the form of the name being Barre Street;* and it successively figures as Bar Street (1311), Bare Street (first in 1640), and Bear Street (first in 1732). Probably the street took its name from the adjacent gate or bar at the top of Joy Street, known as East Gate or Broad Gate (*cp.* the ancient Bar Gate in Portsmouth), so that Bear Street would mean the street leading from the bar. This bar appears to have given a surname to an ancient and important Barnstaple family, for in the reign of Henry III one Maurice de la Barre was bound to render a salmon to the King, whenever his Majesty came to hunt on Exmoor;† and Roger de la Barre and Simon de la Barre are mentioned in an inquisition and valuation of the borough of Barnstaple in 1274.‡ Again in that same year the late Morinus de la Bare and his son Maurice (doubtless the same as the one mentioned above) are said to have held eight acres "in Bare" of the King, their service in sergeantry being now described as one salmon and two arrows;§ and in 1296 we meet with Maud de la Barre, who had recently died, seized of four acres of land and a curtilage "apud la Barre juxta Barnastaple," her service consisting of one salmon and three arrows.‖

**Barnstaple Records*, vol. 2, p. 171.

†*Testa de Nevill* (Record Commission), p. 197.

‡*Barnstaple Records*, vol. 1, p. 104.

§*Rotuli Hundredorum* (Record Commission), i, 65.

‖*Chancery Inquisition post mortem*, Edw. I, file 66, no. 20.

In the following century again we find a Simon de la Barr, who was one of the brethren of the Guild of St Nicholas in 1303 and Mayor in 1311; a Thomas atte (*i.e.*, at the) Barre, who was Member of Parliament and several times Mayor in the reign of Edward III; his son and heir Simon Barre, who was Mayor in 1359; and about the same time we meet with a William atte Beare, a John ate Barr, a Philip atte Barre, and others, the family being so well established in Barnstaple that they continue to figure in the records for some centuries afterwards.

Around Bear Street there must have sprung up quite an important suburb at a somewhat early date, for we find that in 1507 there were as many as fifty persons resident in "Barre Strete," who paid church rates. An attempt was made last century to alter the name to Ebberly Street—an attempt that was successful for four years (1823—7), but happily the ancient and historic title was then restored to favour.

On the field which bore the name of Bear Street Meadow at least as early as 1638, when Tobias Cooper held it, and which a century and a half later was owned by Colonel Beavis, were built in 1794 a range of militia barracks. The property was afterwards sold to Mr Henry Hole of Ebberly in the parish of Roborough, who gave it the name of Ebberly Place and converted the barracks into private residences; and at a much

later date (about 1862) one of the building societies of Barnstaple erected here, facing the barracks, a row of more pretentious and up-to-date houses, the two now being known as Ebberly Lawn.

Another very ancient street is Queen Street, which can be traced as far back as 1329, when it was known as Lange Lane, a name that was exchanged for Back Lane in 1642. The inhabitants, however, were so dissatisfied with this latter derogatory appellation, that they petitioned the Town Council for relief, with the gratifying result that in 1851 they were permitted to re-name their street after the title of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.*

Opening out of Queen Street is Garden Court, which early last century bore the name of Garden Alley or Myrtle Place, and consisted of gardens belonging to tradesmen in High Street. At the top of Garden Court is a little disused cemetery, which, having been a garden, was given in 1812 by Mr Zachariah Stiff to the Congregationalists, and was regularly used as a Nonconformists' burial-ground until the opening of the general cemetery in 1856. Hard by is Mallett's Row, occupying ground that was owned a century ago by Mr Henry Mallett, a builder.

Tenements were built on land above Queen Street by a Mr Davy and a Mr Aze, whence the new quarter was called at first Davy's Lane, a name that was changed to New Street in 1828, and to

*W. F. Gardiner's *Barnstaple*, p. 13.

Aze's Lane in 1830.* Aze, it may be noted, has been known as a surname in Barnstaple for about two centuries, a Francis Aze being mentioned early in the reign of George II.

Vicarage Street (until recent times called Vicarage Lane) took its name from the fact that an official residence for the Vicar of Barnstaple was built here in 1313 by the Prior and Convent of St Mary Magdalene, who allotted some of their own land for the purpose; and here the successive vicars have continued to live ever since. In after times a goodly house was erected almost opposite the vicarage, and known as Vicarage Street House, or later as Vicarage Lawn. It figures in the Church Rate Book in 1709, and in the latter part of that century was inhabited by the Reverend William Prince, and then by Mr George Barbor; who were succeeded in the following century by Dr Morgan, Mr William Snow, and Mr Gibbings, on whose death in 1887, though the mansion was left, the beautiful estate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres was sold for building purposes, rows of houses were erected, bearing the name of Vicarage Lawn, and a thoroughfare opened between Vicarage Street and Bear Street.

The district known as Derby is the most populous part of our parish, and formed the bulk of the parish at its formation in 1844. It comprises most of Vicarage Street, Higher and Lower Maudlin Streets, Portland Buildings, Prince's

*Map in Gribble's *Memorials*.

Street, Newington Street, Union Street, Reform Street, Corser Street, and New Buildings. The name, which appears in the Rate Book first in 1829, was given to this district in consequence of the introduction of the lace industry.

It seems that in 1821 some gentlemen from Nottingham and Derby established a factory at Raleigh in Pilton, and began making bobbin net. About four years later, however, the partnership was dissolved, and a new factory was established beside Vicarage Lane by Mr John Boden, who purchased from Mrs Abigail Holey of Bideford and her son Mr James Hanmer Holey about ten acres of land with a dwelling house, situated near Stoney Bridge. The property was known as the Brick-field, and the building that he erected on it was at first called the Stoney Bridge Factory; but as Mr Boden came from the midland Derby, where he had a factory, the houses that sprang up around the Barnstaple factory for the accommodation of his employés soon acquired the name of Derby, and the factory that of the Derby Lace Factory. In 1828 Mr Boden sold the property to Mr John Miller of Loughborough, who on his death in 1842 was succeeded by his three sons, John May Miller, Alfred Henry Miller, and William Walter Miller, by whom the possession and management were handed over to a company, entitled the Miller Brothers, of which Mr Hubert William Miller is now the Director. The industry flourished so well

that another factory was erected by the London Road, and thus Barnstaple had three lace factories, all started in five years, and together employing over a thousand hands. The other two, however, have vanished long ago, leaving the Derby Factory in sole possession with about 360 employés (325 working on the premises and 35 at home), who by the aid of machinery convert vast quantities of cotton hanks into curtain-netting.

The Derby District grew up very rapidly. Before 1826 there was only one house there, but by 1830 there were 120. First came Corser Street, built in 1827 by Mr John Boden, and named after him Boden's Row; but later its designation was changed, his daughter having married the Reverend John Corser, who at one time lived at Zephyr Cottage. The houses are of the meanest description, and the space is too narrow to allow a foot-path on either side. Until about twenty years ago the only entrance—it has never been a thoroughfare—was a covered passage leading through a house, and it formerly bore a very evil reputation with the police authorities.

Prince's Street came into existence about the same time. It is so called because it stands on what was once Prince's Meadow, which came into the possession of the Reverend William Prince, Vicar of Landkey, (already mentioned as residing in Vicarage Street House,) by his marriage with a Miss Boyse, whose father was Rector of Shirwell.

Reform Street followed in 1832, its title commemorating the passing of the great Reform Bill of that year; and Union Street and Newington Street in 1837, the latter taking its name from the Newington Inn (adapted from a residence called Newington House), which stood in Vicarage Lane almost opposite the factory. The name Union Street is thought to have arisen from its opening a way between Vicarage Street and Gaydon Street.

To the same period belong Higher Maudlin Street and Lower Maudlin Street, which keep alive the memory of the old St Mary Magdalene's Priory, on whose lands they now stand, and which bear evidence of the customary pronunciation of the name Magdalene.

At the beginning of last century there were no houses in our parish on the Rackfield estate except one for a rope-maker (whose house and rope-walk occupied the brink of the mill stream), and two others on the Boutport Street side of the tan-yard. On the street front were two good dwelling houses (still there between Coronation Street and the Assembly Rooms); but these are without our parochial boundaries, as are also the existing remains of the priory.

The present tan-yard and row of Rackfield Cottages date from 1819, and recently several streets have been built on the ancient priory domain, namely, King Edward, Coronation and Seventh Streets, whose designations betoken their

creation at the commencement of the reign of His late Majesty; while Charles Street and George Street were named in honour of the present owner Mr Charles H. Symons and his father.

Of other streets in the parish Gaydon Street took its present designation in 1839, and enshrines the name of a worthy Barnstaple family—a John Gaydon was Mayor in 1726, and in 1733 John Gaydon, junior, sold some land that he possessed here, called Gaydon's Ground. It was previously known as Short's Lane, after the owner of the property. Alexandra Road (formerly Shute Lane) was built in 1863, its name being a permanent record of the then Princess of Wales, who was married in that year.

The Union Workhouse in Alexandra Road was erected in 1837 instead of the old establishment in Tuly Street, and was provided with a stone chapel, built in Gothic style, in 1855. It has accommodation for 327 inmates, and the children are housed in three cottage homes facing it across the street.

Sunflower Road was begun in 1886—when the æsthetic craze for sunflowers was still in vogue; so the residence at the head of the street was adorned with a finial in the form of that flower and was dubbed Sunflower House, and the dwellings erected on each side of the road were correspondingly named.

The Honourable Mark Rolle was the owner of land on the north of Bear Street Road, and when in 1888 a road was formed and houses sprang up there, he called the place Bicton Street after his beautiful property at Bicton near Budleigh Salterton.

Fort Street and Fort Terrace bring reminiscences of the Great Fort, which occupied the ground just above them, while Hills' View (or at least the older portion of it) faces the beautiful wooded hills on which the country houses of Upcott and Roborough are so admirably placed overlooking Barnstaple.

A very important feature of Barnstaple during the Civil War was the Great Fort, of which our first notice occurs early in 1643. This was a veritable stronghold, of curious and most unusual form, being heptagonal, with bastions at the angles, and surrounded by a dry ditch. Twenty-eight guns were mounted here, and Fort Hill being a considerable elevation situated outside the town to the south-east, the Great Fort not only effectually blocked the two roads on this side (Bear Street and Sowden Lane), but together with the Castle dominated the whole place. Barnstaple was then in the hands of the Parliamentarians, who were apparently responsible for its erection at the cost of £1120. In the following September, however, Barnstaple was surrended to Prince Maurice and occupied by Colonel Digby, and one of the articles of capitulation

enacted that the fortifications were to be levelled; but though the guns were removed and some works of demolition undertaken, the Great Fort was by no means destroyed, and was afterwards restored and held by the Royalists until 1646, when after a blockade of six weeks the town capitulated to Sir Thomas Fairfax, and a few days later (April 21st) Sir Allen Apsley and his garrison marched out of the Great Fort. With the exception of Fort Charles at Salcombe and Pendennis Castle near Falmouth, Barnstaple was the last fortress in Devon and Cornwall to hold out for the King, and its surrender marked the practical end of the war in the west.*

From that time the Great Fort vanished from the page of history, and every vestige of its masonry has long ago disappeared, leaving only grass-grown mounds to mark the spot and to indistinctly outline its ground-plan. The southern part of the site was levelled about thirty years ago for the erection of a house that now serves as the vicarage, and during the work there were unearthed a musket, a sword, and some cannon-balls.

Reference has already been made to the vicarage house, and to Mr Windsor's success in getting together the money required for its acquisition and enlargement. The site and the villa standing on it—named Addington House by Mr Rivett after

**Barnstaple during the great Civil War*, R. W. Cotton, pp. 113, 116, 228, 506, 511–517.

one of his mission-stations in Natal—were purchased from Messrs Henry Sillifant and Thomas Lee for £1,400, the area being nearly half an acre (1 rood, 33 perches, and 5 yards). They had bought the land from the Barnstaple Freehold Land Society and built a house upon it in 1887, at the time that Ashleigh Road, at the top of which it is situated, was being laid out as a residential quarter. The first occupant was the Reverend A. W. L. Rivett, who resided there for eight years (1889—1897), and was followed by Mr Frank Chanter, whose tenancy lasted only two years. The purchase was completed on April 13th, 1899, but considerable alterations were effected before the Reverend E. J. Windsor took up his abode in it. A new wing was added at the back, extending eastwards, and containing a large room and a store-room on the ground floor and two bed-rooms above. The study and the bed-room above it were enlarged by the addition of the south-east corner of the house—for these rooms had before been of the curious shape of a square with one quarter taken away. Hitherto the domain had been bounded on the north merely by a hedge of stones and earth with bushes growing on it, but this was replaced by a ten-foot stone wall; and the space between that wall and the back of the house was enclosed by side walls, a spacious tool-house being erected along the east side of the yard. At the same time a portion of the upper garden was levelled to serve

as a croquet lawn, and the lower was planted with ornamental shrubs, and screened from the public eye by the fixing of a wooden paling on the front wall. The architect of the original house was Mr William Clement Oliver, and the contractors for the additions (which cost £491) were Messrs John P. Gammon and George Garland. Further improvements were introduced in 1914, when the house was fitted throughout with electric light, and a summer-house was erected in the north-east corner of the upper garden.

The house, which is admirable in every respect, contains eleven apartments on the ground floor and eleven on the upper, and is remarkable for the number and size of its windows. It is provided with a small conservatory at the front door, with a verandah outside the drawing-room, and with a weather-vane on the roof. It stands 116 feet above sea-level, and commands views of the estuary and the upper waters of the River Taw, Codden Hill (630 feet), the tower in Tawstock Park, Braunton Burrows and Lighthouse, and Lundy Island, 28 miles distant.

There are four Nonconformist places of worship in the parish—the United Methodist (Thorne Memorial Chapel), surmounted by a tower and spire 70 feet high, with school-room and class-rooms adjoining, in Bear Street; the Brethren Chapel with school-room and class-rooms in Grosvenor Street; the Reform Street Mission Chapel, with

services conducted on independent lines; and the Rackfield Hall, an off-shoot of the Plymouth Brethren; besides which for a considerable part of last century there existed the Brethren's Ebenezer Chapel with burial ground in Vicarage Street near its west end.

Besides the Church Day Schools there are in the parish two other public elementary schools. The Wesleyan Day Schools, situated at the top of Reform Street, and comprising Mixed and Infants' Departments, were opened in 1853, and provide accommodation for 230 children; and in 1896 the Barnstaple School Board inaugurated a Mixed School with accommodation for 220, their excellent buildings being placed in spacious grounds near the Vicarage, with entrances from Ashleigh Road and Fort Terrace. There are also three private Schools—one in Hills' View kept by Miss Mew, one in Fort Street by the Misses Symonds, and one in Ebberly Lawn by the Misses Wright.

Within the parish there are nine public-houses —a small number, compared with the population. In Bear Street there are the Rolle Arms, the Stag's Head, and the Ebberly Arms (formerly the Barracks Inn, intended to cater for the soldiers of the barracks in Ebberly Place). In Queen Street is the Globe Inn. In Boutport Street are the White House and the Barley Mow; and Vicarage Street is provided with three—the Carpenters' Arms (formerly the Reform Inn), the Curriers' Arms, and

the Union Inn. The Derby District used to be the dispair of social reformers, and the hunting-ground of the police, but conditions have somewhat improved since those days.

CHAPTER XV.

St Mary Magdalene.

The town of Magdala was situated on the shore of the beautiful Sea of Galilee, about half-way up the west coast. The position is a lovely one, at the south end of the Plain of Gennesaret, with a magnificent steep mountain rising behind it to the height of a thousand feet, while in front is the lake, edged with a beach of white pebbles. Its name in Hebrew (Migdal) would mean "watch-tower," and it can probably be traced as far back as the occupation of the Promised Land by the Israelites, when Migdal-el fell to the lot of the tribe of Naphtali. It was a place of wealth and importance, celebrated for its dye-works and its manufactories of fine woollen textures, and for its trade in pigeons—then, as now, abounding in the high cliffs behind the town—which were much in demand for sacrificial purposes; but its inhabitants bore an evil reputation for their immoral lives.

At the present day the place, know as Mejdel, is a tiny village, consisting merely of a collection of mud and stone huts of irregular shape and size,

and built without any methodical arrangement. Each dwelling is enclosed by a mud wall, and consists of a court, which the family occupy together with their animals and dogs, and of rooms or shelters opening out of the court. The flat roof generally carries a sort of summer-house or arbour, made of reeds with intertwining branches. The houses are poor and squalid, and the inhabitants, who are Moslems, are of a low type. There are, however, remains of a massive wall, and some good stone arches, and the base of an old square tower, which seem to bespeak former prosperity. A single tall palm-tree grows in the compound of some Franciscan brethren, who have recently settled here, and outside the village is a little Moslem oratory.

Here lived Mary Magdalene, apparently a woman of substance (St Luke viii. 2-3), but sadly afflicted, for she was possessed by seven devils—which probably means that she suffered from some terrible species of madness. In the early days of His ministry, however, Christ took pity on her and healed her, and—beautiful example of gratitude and devotion—she joined the band of the twelve Apostles and the holy women who accompanied Him in His journeyings, and was one of those who "ministered unto Him of their substance," i.e., she helped to pay the necessary expenses of His board and lodging and clothes.

Evidently she remained constant in her attendance on Him throughout His ministry, though we have no actual mention of this; and we next come across her as one of the faithful friends who were present at His crucifixion, watching by Him, it would seem, the whole time, even when His mother had been tenderly escorted home by St John. Still unflagging in her devotion to her benefactor, she followed His body to the grave and saw it entombed, and, scarce able to drag herself away, stayed there awhile, "sitting over against the sepulchre" (St Matthew xxvii. 61). But she figures most prominently of all in connection with our Lord's resurrection. Very early on Easter morning, while it was yet dark, she started out with other women, carrying spices to put upon the corpse in order to prevent its natural decay. On the way they discussed a difficulty—how they were to find at that early hour some man to roll back the heavy circular stone that closed the opening of the tomb; but on their arrival, lo! the stone had been removed, and the tomb was open. While the others entered in, St Mary Magdalene ran back to St Peter and St John, who were following, to tell them that the body was gone, and then, returning with them for their investigation, remained weeping by the tomb after they had left. There she saw two angels sitting within, and a few moments later caught sight of our Lord Himself, though at first in her sorrow and excitement she failed to recognise Him,

mistaking Him for the gardener. Here follows the narrative of her interview with Him (St John xx. 15-18), His one word "Mary" making her realize that she was speaking to her friend now risen from the dead; and the warning "touch me not" making it plain to her that the old familiarities of earth must cease, though a closer spiritual communion would be open to her when He should have ascended to the Father. The last time that the Bible mentions her by name is when we are told how she went to impart the glad news to the disciples, though they refused to credit her tidings. There can be no doubt however that she was one of the women who "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" with the Apostles and others during the period after the Ascension (Acts i. 14), and was consequently one of the company on whom the Holy Ghost descended on the Day of Pentecost.

This constitutes the brief biography of St Mary Magdalene, and from it we gather these thoughts. Here is a beautiful instance of the gratitude of a woman, who was much blessed by Christ, and repaid His loving-kindness by devoting her money, her time, her heart's affection to His service. And He was not unmindful of her self-sacrifice, for she was the first of all His adherents to whom He showed Himself after His resurrection, thus honouring her above the other holy women, above the Apostles, and even above His own mother.

In the east window of our church there are six pictures containing the figure of St Mary Magdalene. These include her healing, our Lord's Crucifixion, the women at the tomb, Christ appearing to her on Easter morning, and the Ascension. There is also one representing the "woman which was a sinner" (St Luke vii. 37-50), who washed our Lord's feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head; for many people have thought that that woman was the same as St Mary Magdalene, and poets and painters have delighted to enlarge on the idea; so that in divers pictures and hymns our Patron Saint figures as a penitent sinner, and the term "a Magdalene" is even sometimes used in modern parlance to describe such a woman. It seems highly improbable however that, if they were one and the same, St Luke should have been unaware of their identity; or if he knew it, that he should not have mentioned her name, or at least have informed his readers that she was the same whom he describes a few verses further on as "Mary called Magdalene" (St Luke viii. 2).

What became of St Mary Magdalene after the day of Pentecost we do not know for certain; but early writers declare that she followed the Apostle St John to Ephesus and there died—according to some by martyrdom. But of this we may be sure, that she, whose life was characterized by such signal self-sacrifice for Christ's sake, will occupy an honourable place in those many mansions that He

has gone to prepare; and that if we practise similar devotion for the cause of Christ, we shall be numbered with St Mary Magdalene in glory everlasting.

People are sometimes in doubt as to how they ought to pronounce the name of our parish and patron saint, and it may be of some interest to examine into the matter.

Of course the cognomen Magdalene designates this Mary as having belonged to the village of Magdala by the Sea of Galilee, but while the Latin scholars of the middle ages would doubtless know her as Maria Magdalena, there is sufficient evidence that in English the word was pronounced as Maudlin.

The author once wrote to ask the opinion of so eminent an authority as the late Dr Skeat, Professor of Anglo-Saxon in Cambridge University, who replied thus: — "It will certainly be in accordance with the regular development of sounds to say *Maudlin*. There is a Maudlin College at Cambridge, and a Maudlin College at Oxford, the former spelt Magdalene, and the latter, Magdalen (without final *e*). Chaucer's scribes always spell it *Maudelayne*. It was then trisyllabic; the vowel between *d* and *l* was omitted at a later period. The pronunciation *Maudlin* is certainly justified by ancient usage."

To these arguments Professor Skeat might have added this, that the common adjective *maudlin*

certainly owes its origin to St Mary Magdalene or Maudlin, who, from being wrongly identified with the "woman which was a sinner" (St Luke vii. 37), has commonly been portrayed by artists as having eyes swollen and red with weeping—though indeed it might have originated from her weeping by the sepulchre on Easter morning and consequently failing to recognise the Lord.

Furthermore, there is local proof that here in Barnstaple the accepted pronunciation has been *Maudlin* and not *Magdalene*, for in our own parish are two streets whose designations are always spelt as well as pronounced thus:—"Higher Maudlin Street" and "Lower Maudlin Street." Undoubtedly these names are survivals of the old "Maudlin Close"—still remembered by aged inhabitants—which marked the site of the ancient Priory of St Mary Magdalene; and the continued use of the name *Maudlin* down to the present day is enough to show the usage of our forefathers, and to indicate that we are right in adopting the pronunciation "St Mary Maudlin."

APPENDIX I.

LISTS OF CHURCH OFFICIALS.

PRIORS.

(With the dates of their institution and vacation of office.)

Norman ... ... about 1170.
Simon ... ... about 1180.
Richard ... ... 1226.
An unnamed Prior 22 July 1261—1265.
Simon de Gurney 20 August 1265—excommunicated 20 [August 1272.
Vacancy ... ... 20 August 1272—29 June 1275.
Theobald de Curtipalacio ... 29 June 1275—
Paschasius ... ... 1297.
John de Sancta Gemma was Prior in 1314, resigned 1332.
John Soyer (or de Parys) 18 March 1333, died 1334.
Imbert de Gaumachiis (or Danmanchiis) 10 November [1334—
Reginald Pizdoe ... 9 December 1349, resigned 1351.
Roger Hayn (or de Capiaco) 7 November 1351, died 1376.
Ralph Chelfham ... 29 December 1376, died 1392.
Henry Sutton ... 28 May 1392, died 1398.
Simon Oclee... 3 September 1398, died 15 June 1428.
Hugh Lytone 24 July 1428, died 16 December 1462.

John Pylton I	6 January 1463, died September 1490.
John Ilfracombe	... ... 1490, resigned 1501.
John Pylton II	... 7 April 1501, retired 1517.
Robert Thorne	12 July 1518, resigned 4 February 1536.

VICARS.

The Reverend James Pycroft, B.A.
10 March 1845—1855.

The Reverend Henry John Bull, M.A.
28 June 1856—15 Jannary 1883.

The Reverend John Cunningham Geikie, D.D., LL.D.
28 May 1883—8 May 1885.

The Reverend Alfred William Lovely Rivett
12 May 1885—20 February 1897.

The Reverend Edward John Windsor
8 April 1897—30 April 1907.

The Reverend Robert James Edmund Boggis, M.A., B.D.
13 June 1907—1915.

ASSISTANT CURATES.

The Reverend Alexander Griffith, A.K.C.
31 January 1885—April 1885.

The Reverend Alfred Bowman, B.A.
20 June 1886—9 June 1888.

The Reverend Edward Robert Fisher, M.A.
20 June 1888—29 November 1888.

*The Reverend William Arthur Badger
January 1889—June 1890.

*Not licensed.

The Reverend Edward MacGregor Hadow
10 July 1890—25 June 1894.

The Reverend Edward Stanley Beale Windsor, M.A.
1 March 1899—26 October 1903.

*The Reverend Charles William Sherard, M.A.
November 1903—April 1904.

*The Reverend George Henry Butler, M.A.
May 1905—September 1905.

The Reverend Arthur Erasmus Bond, L.Th.
13 November 1905—30 September 1907.

The Reverend John William Hadrian Sowerbutts
29 January 1908—31 May 1909.

The Reverend Gilbert Harris Arundell, B.A.
11 October 1909—29 September 1910.

The Reverend Charles William Winch
21 August 1911—16 July 1913.

The Reverend John Lamb Brodie
16 September 1913—15 May 1915.

*Not licensed.

DEACONESSES.

Miss Frances Gertrude Shaw
March 1900—September 1901.

Miss Elizabeth Agnes Hellins ... 1 May 1910—1915.

LAY READERS.

Mr Henry Heape ... ... July 1884—1885.

Mr Charles Henry Garland ... 1 June 1904—April 1907.

Mr Longworth Ellis Wilding ... 8 April 1913—1915.

CHURCHWARDENS.

(NOTE.—The records of some of the early appointments have been lost.)

Mr John Morris Fisher and Mr William Snow ... 1848—9.
Mr John Morris Fisher ... ... 1851—2.
Mr John Morris Fisher and Mr Joseph Hancock... 1854—5.
Mr John Morris Fisher and Dr Charles Henry Hiern 1857—8.
Dr Charles Henry Hiern and Mr Hugh Ballment 1859—60.
Dr Charles Henry Hiern... ... ... 1860—1.
Dr Charles Henry Hiern... ... ... 1861—2.
Mr John Morris Fisher ... ... 1863—4.
Mr John Morris Fisher and Mr Charles Lock ... 1866—7.
Mr William Gibbings and Mr Richard William Cotton [1867—9.
Mr William Gibbings and Mr Charles Lock ... 1869—85.
Mr William Gammon and Mr Charles Lock ... 1885—7.
Dr Joseph Harper and Mr Thomas Garland ... 1887—8.
Dr Joseph Harper and Mr William Garland ... 1888—97.
Dr Joseph Harper and Mr William Phillips 1897—1900.
Dr Joseph Harper and Mr George Mills ... 1900—2.
Dr John Robinson Harper and Mr George Mills 1903—10.
Dr John Robinson Harper and Mr William Charles Bartlett [1910—3.
Dr John Robinson Harper and Mr Thomas Stallwood [Watkinson 1913—4.
Dr John Robinson Harper and Mr Archibald Northcote [1914—5
Mr George Mills and Mr Archibald Northcote ... 1915.

SIDESMEN.

Mr Tom John Pitts Tucker	1884—7.
Mr John Abbott	1884—5.
Mr William Gammon... ...	1884—5, 1887—8.
Mr Lionel Thomas Bencraft	1884—5.
Mr Edward Dennis	1884—8.
Mr Edward Peake	1884—5.
Mr John Pulsford	1885—8.
Mr Joseph Feary Brockliss ...	1885—1912, 1915.
Mr John Warren	1885—1909.
Mr John Pyke Gammon	1885—1915.
Mr Thomas Garland	1886—7.
Mr Edward Petter	1886—8.
Mr Charles Lock	1887—1905.
Mr John Shore	1888—1901.
Mr Edwin Burgess	1888—99.
Mr John Hartnoll	1888—94.
Mr William Phillips	1890—7, 1900—6.
Mr William Litson Richards	1894—9.
Mr. John Burgess Symons	1896—8.
Mr William Hussell	1897—1915.
Mr Thomas Henry Sanders	1897—1904.
Mr Henry Gunn Jarvis	1897—1909.
Mr James Henry Gammon	1897—1915.
Mr John Halls	1898—1906.
Mr Frank Phillips	1899—1910.
Mr George Mills	1899—1900, 1910—5.
Mr William Henry Hernaman Martin ...	1900—15.
Mr Thomas Stallwood Watkinson...	1900—11, 1914—5.
Mr William Conibear Gammon	1903—15.

Mr Frederick John Ratcliffe	1903—6.
Mr Dudley Squire	1903—8.
Mr Hubert John Hutchings	1904—8.
Mr John Colwill	1905—14.
Mr William Bryant	1905—15.
Mr Caleb Simper	1905—8.
Mr William Cory Braund	1908—15.
Mr George Catford	1908—13.
Mr George Edward Dawe	1908—13.
Mr Percival Harris	1908—15.
Mr Archibald Northcote ...	1908—10, 1911—4.
Mr Esau William Callow	1908—15.
Mr Clifford William Parkin	1908—9.
Mr Arthur Edward Youings	1908—15.
Mr William Charles Bartlett ...	1909—10, 1913—5.
Mr Francis John Codd	1909—12.
Mr Samuel Taylor	1909—15.
Mr George Vincent	1909—15.
Mr Reginald Crang	1910—15.
Mr James Hussell	1911—5.
Mr Alfred Manning Robinson	1911—5.
Mr William Stanbury...	1911—5.
Mr George Goffey	1912—3.
Mr John D. Sisson	1912—3.
Mr George Frederick Lefroy	1914—5.
Mr Charles Mostyn Ansell	1915.
Mr. William Thomas Essery	1915.

PARISH CLERKS.

Mr John Colwill	1867—1904.
Mr Robert Henry Lemon	1910—1915.

SACRISTANS.

Mr Charles Henry Garland	1899—1908.
Mr Robert James Lemon	1909—1915.

ORGANISTS.

Miss Tree	1846—c. 1850.
Mr John Edwards	1846—c. 1850.
Mr William Curtis	c. 1850—c. 1856.
Miss Mildred Jane Hewish	c. 1856—c. 1863.
Mrs Eliza Austwick Cotton	c. 1863—c. 1866.
Miss Lowndes	c. 1866—c. 1868.
Mrs Sarah Decima Bull	c. 1868— 1870.
Miss Emma Hiern	1870—c. 1875.
Miss Minnie Lock	c. 1875— 1885.
Mr Henry Clement Oliver	1885— 1889.
Mr George Higgs	1889— 1897.
Mr Caleb Simper	1897— 1904.
Mr Ernest Brokenshire	1904— 1909.
Mr Alfred Miller Burrow	1909— 1910.
Mr Courtenay John Williams ...	1910— 1915.
Mr Thomas Hartley	1914— 1915.

HEAD TEACHERS OF THE DAY SCHOOLS.

The Mixed School.

Mr Thomas Bailey Hodgkin ...	1861—1865.
Mr Reuben Bond	1866—1867.
Mr William German	1867—1870.
Mr C. J. Derbyshire (temporary) ...	1870—1870.
Mr Charles Henry Kempthorne ...	1871—1872.
Mr William Hosken	1873—1874.
Mr Richard Bennetts	1874—1874.
Mr James Dobbie	1874—1875.
Mr William Henry Kenner ...	1875—1878.
Mr Walter Little	1878—1896.
Mr William Henry Hernaman Martin	1896—1915.

THE INFANTS' SCHOOL.

Miss Sarah Harwood	1865—1866.
Miss Elizabeth Perkins Holloway ...	1866—1869.
Miss Maria Barnes	1870—1875.
Miss Fanny Kemp	1875—1908.
Miss Margaret Wilson Rowand Cousins	1908—1915.

SUPERINTENDENTS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The Reverend Henry John Bull ...	1856—1883.
Mr John Warren (Alexandra Road School)	1883—1899.
Mr Walter Little	1883—1896.
Mr William Henry Hernaman Martin ...	1896—1897.
The Reverend Edward John Windsor ...	1897—1899.
The Reverend Edward Stanley Beale Windsor	1899—1903.
Mr James Hussell	1903—1915.
Mr Longworth Ellis Wilding	1915.

APPENDIX II.

PAROCHIAL CALENDAR.

15 January. Rev. Henry John Bull resigned as Vicar 1883.
18 January. Lady Chapel dedicated 1914.
4 February. Suppression of St Mary Magdalene's Priory 1536.
20 February. Rev. Alfred William Lovely Rivett resigned as Vicar 1897.
21 February. Rev. James Pycroft born 1813.
28 February. Rev. Henry John Bull died 1889.
8 March. Enlargement of the parish 1886.
9 March. Dissolved Priory granted to Lord William Howard 1538.
10 March. Rev. James Pycroft licensed as first Vicar 1845.
10 March. Rev. James Pycroft died 1895.
11 March. Rev. Henry Luxmoore born 1794.
23 March. Mr Gilbert Knill Cotton died 1868.
25 March. Mrs Sarah Decima Bull died 1870.
1 April. Mr Benjamin Ferrey, Architect, born 1810.
1 April. Rev. John Cunningham Geikie died 1906.
8 April. Rev. Edward John Windsor licensed as fifth Vicar 1897.
13 April. Vicarage house purchased 1899.
14 April. Last meeting of the Church Building Committee 1847.
24 April. Rev. Alfred William Lovely Rivett born 1835.
30 April. Rev. Edward John Windsor resigned as Vicar 1907.

8 May. Rev. John Cunningham Geikie resigned as Vicar 1885.
12 May. Rev. Alfred William Lovely Rivett licensed as fourth Vicar 1885.
15 May. Dedication of the Day School 1861.
16 May. Spire of the Church completed 1846.
16 May. Choir vestry dedicated 1904.
28 May. Rev. John Cunningham Geikie licensed as third Vicar 1883.
6 June. Rev. J. J. Scott's Agreement 1842.
6 June. Mr Benjamin Ferrey appointed Architect 1844.
13 June. Rev. Robert James Edmund Boggis licensed as sixth Vicar 1907.
15 June. Public Induction of do. 1907.
15 June. Rev. Henry Luxmoore died 1876.
26 June. Mr Gilbert Knill Cotton born 1801.
28 June. Rev. Henry John Bull licensed as second Vicar 1856.
7 July. Inaugural meeting for a district church 1842.
7 July. Rev. Edward John Windsor born 1841.
11 July. First meeting of the Church Building Committee 1842.
19 July. Rev. Robert James Edmund Boggis born 1863.
22 July. St Mary Magdalene's Day—Patronal Festival.
1 August. Church re-opened after Improvement 1909.
22 August. Mr Benjamin Ferrey, Architect, died 1880.
29 August. Rev. Henry John Bull born 1819.
29 September. Church organ inaugurated 1884.
23 October. Foundation-stone of the Church laid 1844.
26 October. Rev. John Cunningham Geikie born 1824.
10 November. Church consecrated 1846—Dedication Festival.
10 November. Church Hall dedicated 1912.
28 November. Mr William Snow died 1867.
13 December. Electric light installed in the Church 1908.
16 December. Dr Joseph Harper (Churchwarden) died 1902.

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